United Nations S/PV.7363

Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 7363rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 January 2015, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 21 January 2015, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7363rd meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

"The President invited Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Ms. Buttenheim."

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United Nations S/PV.7364

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7364th meeting
Wednesday, 21 January 2015, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shearman
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (S/2015/36)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-01838 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (S/2015/36)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and His Excellency Mr. Paul Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in the meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. Feltman: I am pleased to brief the Security Council on the final report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB). As members of the Council know, the report before the Council (S/2015/36) reviews the progress made in implementing the mandate of BNUB since 31 July 2014. It also takes stock of the overall mandate implementation of United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in Burundi since 2004. Further, it presents an assessment of the remaining challenges facing Burundi, after the closure of BNUB on 31 December.

In accordance with Security Council resolution 2137 (2014), BNUB ended its drawdown and its mandate on 31 December. I joined Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga in Bujumbura to mark the symbolic closure of the Office on 12 December during my visit to Burundi and had the pleasure to co-chair a warm flag-lowering ceremony with the Minister of External Affairs and International Cooperation.

As the Council is aware, Burundi has made substantial progress, overcoming formidable challenges since the end of the civil war. Burundi has adopted power-sharing as a system of governance, established ethnically balanced institutions and held regular elections, and remains committed to the promise of national reconciliation. Burundi is much safer and secure than it was a decade ago. These achievements, and the spirit of the Arusha Accords on which they were built, are first and foremost attributable to the determination of the Burundians to break with the past and work towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous nation. It is also the result of a remarkable level of steady engagement of regional countries, the United Nations and international partners, demonstrating that concerted international action can yield positive results.

Let me emphasize some of the key challenges that Burundi still faces. The spirit of Arusha, with its principles of dialogue, consensus and democracy, has eroded since the 2010 elections as political polarization continues to hamper efforts to consolidate peace, democracy and development. Concerns remain about shrinking political space, restrictions of the right to free assembly and expression, and the challenges of building an independent justice system, which is a critical element of a functioning democracy. Much greater efforts are also required to strengthen pro-poor economic growth and to create employment opportunities, especially for the country's youth.

Organizing peaceful and credible elections is one of the most pressing challenges facing Burundi this year. As previous elections, the 2015 elections present Burundians with the opportunity to further strengthen peace-consolidation efforts undertaken since the Arusha Accords. For that to happen, it would be desirable for the following requirements to be met: First, it is critical that the Independent National Electoral Commission manage the electoral process in an inclusive manner, with integrity, impartiality and independence.

Secondly, Burundians, regardless of party affiliation, must be free to exercise their civil and political rights, including their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Moreover, it behooves the Government to ensure that opposition parties and their leaders are able to fully participate in the electoral process. Conversely, opposition parties must play their part, remain engaged throughout the electoral process and use peaceful and democratic means to address all electoral disputes.

Thirdly, it is the responsibility of the Government to prevent violence without impinging on the people's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly by ensuring that State officials and security forces act impartially and in line with the law.

Finally, individuals committing unlawful acts of political violence must be prosecuted without delay.

As requested by the Council, the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi (MENUB) started operations on 1 January with the mandate to follow and report on the electoral process in Burundi before, during and after the 2015 elections. Special Envoy Uteem undertook his first visit to Burundi from 3 to 17 January, during which he held fruitful meetings with Government officials and members of the diplomatic corps in Bujumbura. He also inaugurated MENUB in the presence of political party leaders, representatives of civil society organizations and the diplomatic corps. Regrettably, Government officials, the president of the Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI) and representatives of the ruling Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) did not attend the ceremony, as the status of mission agreement had not been signed. We signed that agreement yesterday and believe that the Government will do so today.

Clashes at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo between the Burundian army and armed groups have decreased sharply since July 2014. However, on 30 December, the Burundian army reported clashing with an unidentified armed group of approximately 100 to 200 members entering from neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo into Burundi's Cibitoke province. Over the course of several days, the Burundian army reportedly defeated the group, killing between 95 and 105 of its members. The Government did not formally identify the attackers, and no-one has claimed responsibility for the clash. In another incident, on 4 January, five unidentified gunmen dressed in military fatigues executed three members of the ruling CNDD-FDD in a bar in Ruyigi province, some 250 kilometres east of Bujumbura. If not managed carefully, incidents such as those, at a time of elections, could heighten political tensions.

Beyond the elections, Burundi faces challenges no less critical. Improvements in health, education, employment and infrastructure need to be at the heart of the political debate if the country's leaders are committed to placing the national interest above all others. The Government will need to broaden political space and allow democratic institutions to provide the checks and balances essential for a functioning democracy, especially if it wants to forge broader consensus in policy formulation. Security and justice sector institutions will require sustained professionalization and capacity-building, especially if they are to retain the public trust.

Addressing the remaining challenges will require the efforts of all Burundians and sustained support from Burundi's development partners. The joint communiqué of the Burundi partners conference of 12 December re-emphasized the mutual commitments of the Government and its partners adopted at the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference. As part of its commitments, the Government guaranteed a credible, inclusive and peaceful electoral process, while international and regional partners pledged to continue to support the country's peace consolidation and socioeconomic development efforts.

In that regard, I am pleased to note that the United Nations will continue to provide support through the Peacebuilding Fund to enhance political dialogue and social cohesion, youth participation in political and socioeconomic life, human rights and the resolution of land disputes.

I would like to underscore the importance of the Security Council's support for regional peace and security efforts. The Council's support for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region presents an opportunity in that respect. The African Union, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region all have important roles to play in that regard.

In concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people and the Government of Burundi for the cooperation extended to BNUB, including the seamless and timely completion of the mission's drawdown and exit. I would like to thank the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his outstanding leadership and all BNUB staff for their contribution to the United Nations efforts in Burundi. I would also like to reiterate our appreciation to the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and all bilateral donors for the fruitful partnership for peacebuilding in Burundi.

Finally, I thank the Council for its continued commitment to Burundi through the deployment of United Nations field presences in the country over the past 10 years.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Seger.

Mr. Seger (*spoke in French*): Let me, at the outset, thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, who has just spoken, for his very comprehensive briefing and his personal commitment to the cause of Burundi. We had the pleasure to cross paths in Bujumbura in mid-December 2014 and to jointly attend several meetings, including the closing ceremony for the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), on 12 December, which he mentioned. Also, Mr. Feltman's participation in the round-table meeting between the Government and its main international partners on 11 and 12 December was an important factor for its success.

Let me also welcome the presence of the Burundian representative and my dear friend, His Excellency Mr. Albert Shingiro, who was also in Burundi during my trip and whose personal engagement was decisive for the adoption of the joint declaration in Bujumbura.

Since today's briefing is the last one on BNUB, I would like to join with others in expressing my gratitude to the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, my dear friend Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and his team for their outstanding efforts for the Burundian nation and for our partnership in this common endeavour. However, despite BNUB's departure — and I am sure Parfait would concur with me on this — it is not yet time to look to the past. On the contrary, our focus should be on the future. The stakes are too high, especially in the context of the electoral process, to allow us to lower our guard.

In my capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration, I visited Burundi from 8 to 12 December 2014 together with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco. Since I already transmitted a detailed report to the Council, which was attached to my letter dated 30 December 2014 (S/2014/954), I will address only the most important aspect, the round-table meeting.

I was heartened by the discussions we had during the two-day event on important issues such as the follow-up to the mutual commitments taken in Geneva in 2012, the implications of BNUB's drawdown on the wider international cooperation between Burundi and its partners, and the future prospects for the partnership, assuming that the elections will be free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful. In that regard, I especially welcome President Nkurunziza's personal commitment to free, inclusive and peaceful elections, as expressed at the opening of the round-table meeting. The joint communiqué adopted at the end of the round table is a very promising step, and it is my hope that going forward it will serve as a guiding document for all of us. I appeal both to the Government of Burundi and to international partners to fully implement the political commitments made in the joint communiqué.

Let me now turn to three main points that, in my view, merit particular attention from the Council: first, the current security situation; secondly, the United Nations presence on the ground; and, thirdly, the future of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

I fully share the concerns expressed by Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman regarding the recent acts of violence in the provinces of Cibitoke and Ruyigi, which, unfortunately, resulted in a significant number of victims. Those recent attacks, as well as all recourse to violent means for political ends, must be firmly condemned. Given that uncertainties persist regarding the identity of the armed groups and the exact nature of the hostilities, I strongly recommend that the competent national authorities carry out investigations into the events in a quick and impartial manner. As long as the facts have not been established, rumours will spread and aggravate the already tense political environment in the run-up to the elections. I am convinced that an impartial investigation could serve as a much-needed confidence-building measure.

In the same vein, I also strongly condemn the attack on 4 January by unidentified assailants on supporters of the ruling party, the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD), near the border with Tanzania, that claimed three lives. Those incidents have shown once again that despite BNUB's drawdown, we — and here I include the Council — must remain vigilant. The electoral phase is getting into full swing and is creating tensions that need be carefully managed. We would be ill-advised to be lulled into complacency at this point.

It goes without saying that violence, by whomsoever committed, should have no place in Burundi. In the context of the electoral process, the only viable option for all Burundian stakeholders is the path of dialogue, based on the spirit of Arusha. This cannot be stressed enough. Only a truly inclusive political dialogue and an open political space that ensures the protection of all

public liberties and rights for all can lay the groundwork for genuinely free, fair, peaceful and credible elections.

Let me now turn to my second point. The presence of the United Nations on the ground is undergoing substantial changes. The United Nations country team, headed by the Resident Coordinator; the new electoral mission, the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi (MENUB); and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights must work hand in hand to ensure maximum impact. Also, the Government must continue to cooperate with the entire United Nations family constructively and in good faith.

Following BNUB's drawdown, the electoral mission MENUB was officially inaugurated at a ceremony in Bujumbura on Monday, 12 January, as the Assistant Secretary-General noted. I welcome today's signing of the status-of-mission agreement, which forms the basis for constructive cooperation between the Burundian Government and MENUB. I trust that MENUB will now be able to play the role with which it has been entrusted by the Security Council, and as requested by the Burundian Government, including engaging with all political actors in Burundi. We had the pleasure to welcome the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and Head of MENUB, Mr. Cassam Uteem, at a Steering Group meeting of the Burundi configuration on 22 December, and I very much look forward to closely cooperating with him and his team throughout the electoral period.

With BNUB's mandate at an end, the United Nations country team, headed by the Resident Coordinator, now leads the United Nations presence on the ground. In a bilateral meeting with UNDP Administrator Ms. Helen Clark last week, assured me that her office is well aware of, and taking the measures necessary to accommodate, the specific needs resulting from the current political context in view of the upcoming elections, including the appointment of the new Resident Coordinator, who, I have been told, has been selected and has the right profile. Ms. Clark also promised to accelerate the process of translating the latest grant of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), totaling $11.65 million, into impactful projects in order to support Burundi's peaceful transition.

One of the PBF projects that is ready for implementation is the establishment of a network of human rights defenders to be deployed throughout the country. The project was elaborated over the past nine months in agreement and in close cooperation with Burundi. That observation network would be a very welcome addition to the measures taken to protect and promote the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms during the electoral period. As Burundi recently reiterated its commitment to pursue the promotion of all public freedoms and to ensure the protection of all human rights defenders in the round-table communiqué of 12 December 2014, I urge all parties involved to redouble their efforts so as to ensure the prompt deployment of the network.

I was also informed that there are important outstanding staffing needs within the United Nations country team, particularly in the Resident Coordinator's office. Given the importance of a well-functioning country team, I strongly encourage Member States to consider closing the capacity gaps by seconding staff to the office.

Similarly, the OHCHR bureau is in dire need of financial stability and operational predictability, and has for this reason already lost experienced staff in Burundi. Human rights support and monitoring remain as important as ever in Burundi, and I therefore urge Member States to contribute the necessary financial resources to the OHCHR, to wit, $2.2 million per year. I thank the Peacebuilding Fund and Germany for their substantial support in this regard and hope that others will follow suit as soon as possible.

My third and last point pertains to the future of the PBC. As indicated in my report, my designated successor as Permanent Representative, Ambassador Jurg Lauber, joined me on my last trip to Burundi, primarily to show Switzerland's commitment to carry on with the mandate in case Burundi wishes to remain on the PBC's agenda. We specifically raised this issue at our meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Laurent Kavakure; of course, the question of whether Burundi wants to carry on with the PBC must first and foremost be answered by the Government. I see merit in continuing the engagement beyond this year's elections, for two reasons in particular.

First, the PBC would ensure an element of continuity in the accompaniment of the country. BNUB is already gone, and MENUB's mandate will also expire in the aftermath of the elections. The PBC can help smooth the effects of this transition by remaining engaged through its three main pillars: political support, resource mobilization and the promotion of coherence in international assistance.

Secondly, and depending on the success of the electoral process, the PBC could in future focus even more on socioeconomic development. Here I fully agree with the Assistant Secretary-General that the economic aspect is very important. The current four-year poverty reduction strategy paper will expire in 2016, and, consequently, a new one will have to be elaborated and promoted in order to attract investment. Given the Burundi configuration's ability to convene and the experience it gained in the context of the Geneva process, it could play an important role in supporting the dialogue on the second poverty reduction strategy paper development strategy and in supporting its implementation.

The PBC could also look into the possibility of creating an international forum aimed at attracting private investment in Burundi. I have already raised this issue with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Said Djinnit, and could further explore it with the World Bank and the African Development Bank. Continuing close cooperation with international financial institutions would certainly remain a pillar for future Peacebuilding Commission engagement. In that regard, I warmly welcome the World Bank decision, taken 13 January during a Board of Directors meeting convened by the Swiss Executive Director, to allocate $25 million to support economic reform and to remain attentive to the situation in Burundi.

Ultimately, the decision whether or not to continue the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission will have to be taken by Burundi itself following discussion within the configuration. To that end, I am currently preparing a working document to guide our consideration of the matter.

In the meantime, I will continue to fully discharge my duties as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission throughout the electoral process. I intend to visit the country two more times, in April and June/July, before my own departure. As per usual practice, I will continue to keep the Council informed on the activities of the configuration, and on my trips in particular, knowing that the Council will remain firmly engaged in Burundi throughout the crucial electoral period.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Seger for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiru (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I take the floor, Sir, under your presidency, let me first congratulate you personally and your country on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2015. Rest assured of the full cooperation of the Burundian delegation during your tenure.

Before entering the heart of the matter that brings us together this morning, let me also thank you for convening this important meeting on the latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) (S/2015/36). We also thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his extremely detailed briefing and special interest in our country, Burundi. We recall the strong and constructive message he delivered during his last visit to Burundi, in mid-December, and his wise counsel during the 12 December 2014 meeting with the President of the Republic shortly after the BNUB flag-lowering ceremony. I would also like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga Anyanga, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for the excellent work he did while posted in Bujumbura. We particularly appreciate that he brought a successful conclusion to the enormous work he was able to accomplish in our country in such a short time.

I will focus on four main areas, namely, the electoral process under way with a view to general elections in 2015, a few words on the round table following the Geneva Conference on Burundi held in mid-December 2014 in Bujumbura, and an overview of the security situation. And of course, afterwards I will also make a few general comments on the report (S/2015/36) submitted for the Council's consideration today.

As the Council is aware, the year 2015 will be one of general elections in Burundi. As elsewhere, the Government has taken care to entrust this important event to the Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI), which was set up by consensus. The preparatory process is therefore under way, and an important step has just been taken with the completion of the electoral enrolment operation throughout the national territory and in Burundian Embassies abroad. The operation went very smoothly overall despite the observance in some areas of a few isolated cases of logistical irregularities. Those irregularities will not, however, undermine the entire operation.

As the report recommends in paragraph 63, the Government is committed to doing everything in

its power to ensure that the 2015 elections are free, democratic, inclusive, transparent and take place in a peaceful climate. The Electoral Code, the code of conduct and the road map that have been set up by consensus are, in our view, essential to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections. In paragraph 65 of the report, the Secretary-General expresses his certainty that those instruments, which were adopted by consensus, are essential to the continuation of the process. We agree with him.

The Council may have heard in certain political circles and civil society allegations of an attempt to manipulate the elections. The report refers to that in paragraph 15. Those unfounded concerns are from one of the opposition parties. I must say here that, after having heard those accusations, which were based on isolated and minor cases, the Government and CENI launched messages of appeasement to call on Burundian politicians, civil society and the media to adopt responsible language and behaviour that respect the principles of democracy and tolerance — behavior that would take into account the political culture of our population, bearing in mind the fact that Burundi is a young, still-developing democracy. The quality of the electoral process will depend in part on the experience accumulated gradually since the 2005 elections.

At the meeting on 22 December 2014 between CENI and electoral process stakeholders on the evaluation of the voter enrolment, participants had an opportunity to share concerns about technical and policy solutions that will help CENI complete the finishing touches on the provisional election register. In that connection we have established a regular and open debate on all the matters raised. As the Council is aware, we have championed dialogue since the Arusha Accords, and we will not shirk our responsibilty. Moreover, the report even acknowledges, in paragraph 64, the strong commitment of the Government of Burundi to maintain a frank and ongoing dialogue on the matter.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again express the gratitude of the Government of Burundi to all partners that have already provided financial and material support to the electoral process. The latest to sign the financing convention to support the ongoing electoral process was the European Union, with an amount of €8 million. Of course, we invite all those who wish to do so to act promptly.

We also greatly appreciate the countries and international organizations that have agreed to send electoral observation missions before, during and after the elections in order to put an end to partisan speculation such as that which occurred in 2010 with the unjustified boycott by certain political parties. We hope that they will not commit the same error this year, because the empty-chair policy does not benefit anyone. Even without popular support, one must play the game.

In that regard, we welcome the appointment of the Head of the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB), Mr. Cassam Uteem and we wish him every success in his new duties. He can count on the cooperation of my Government to that effect. The status of mission agreement on MENUB staff has just been finalized between the two parties, allowing his team to work on the ground on a solid legal basis.

As we all know, elections are actually a sign of a properly functioning democracy — because democracy is the set of facts and actions of the daily life of citizens with respect to themselves and the institutions that govern them. Democracy cannot develop in a fragmented, divided society where there is distrust. In that context, the Government of Burundi has just established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the 11 individuals who will serve as commissioners were elected in a climate of transparency.

As the Council knows, Burundi is currently moving from the post-conflict phase to the sustainable socioeconomic development phase. The continuing reconstruction of the country and the long and arduous journey to the harmonious development of the Burundian people require enormous resources that Burundi cannot afford on its own. In that framework, on 11 and 12 December 2014 in Bujumbura, we held with our partners a round table between Burundi and its main development partners. We engaged in a dialogue wherein we took stock of the current strategic framework for growth and poverty reduction by highlighting the progress achieved and the challenges that remain in implementing our mutual commitments. We thank Ambassador Seger for using his expertise to facilitate the negotiations and the adoption of the joint communiqué that led to the round table. We call on our partners to review the document so that the commitments reiterated at the Club du Lac Hotel in Bujumbura will become a reality.

With regard to security and stability, Burundi is a very safe country, as the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs mentioned early in his briefing,

except for a few isolated cases of crime in some parts of the country. Peace and security prevail throughout the nation's territory and people go about their normal activities, as the report acknowledges in paragraph 20. The Government has pledged to stem all forms of crime and disruptions to peace and security. It is worth mentioning that at the end of December 2014, while people were preparing to celebrate the end of the year, Burundi experienced an infiltration, from the neighbouring territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of a column of armed men who were quickly subdued by our courageous soldiers.

We once again reject the choice of violence as a way to achieve political gains in our country. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 59, my country has come a long way. Burundi has suffered greatly through cycles of violence and peace was hard won, thanks to the peace agreements, including the Arusha Accords. For us, this is an achievement to be preserved. The use of violence is unacceptable and must give way to a war of ideas and development programmes.

Speaking of our restored peace that we have regained thanks to the support of the international community, we will continue to support peace, Burundi shall express its gratitude by participating in peacekeeping missions, particularly in Somalia and the Central African Republic. For us, it is a badge of honour to be among the first francophone troop-contributing countries. We take this opportunity to launch again an appeal to the international community to provide more support to our troops who are doing excellent work on the ground far from their families.

I now turn to the report submitted for the Council's consideration. In section C of the report, paragraphs 24 and 25, reference is made to the process of establishing the transitional justice mechanisms. I spoke earlier about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that is already in place. Now the international community must provide sufficient support to the Commission to carry out its mission.

With regard to section D of the report on governance and institution-building, the Government of Burundi will continue to work to combat corruption and seek to address the remaining challenges in this area, which is an ongoing battle. In that regard, we thank our technical and financial partners for their support to the institutions that fight corruption and promote good governance in our country. Of course, we thank our local partners in civil society, who continue to contribute to the common fight against the scourge of corruption. They know who they are. I cannot name them all here as I might forget some.

In terms of the rule of law, as addressed in section E, it would be idealistic to want to establish a perfect rule of law. As the Council knows, the rule of law is an ideal that no country in the world has fully achieved. Despite this, the Government has taken commendable initiatives towards this ideal or at least to try to approximate it. This is the case particularly when we look at the holding of the National Conference on Justice, the drafting of the strategic plan on judicial ethics of the Supreme Council of Magistrates, the review of the legal framework for prisons and correctional institutions and so forth. Even if these efforts were overlooked by the drafters of the report, these are the facts and they have produced tangible results, even though many challenges remain.

With regard to the promotion and protection of human rights in section F of the report, we welcome the fact that the report recognizes that the country has seen significant progress and a marked decrease in the number of what the report calls extrajudicial killings and the political violence of young people who are affiliated with political parties. In that respect, we recall that the fight against impunity remains a priority for the Government.

As for section G on social and economic development, we recall that Burundi, like most developing countries, cannot attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the deadline. However, remarkable progress has been made in the areas of education and health. In any case, development assistance must be reconsidered to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, which still have not been met in our countries, and the post-2015 agenda is a good opportunity to do so. The conference on financing for development to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July will be important in that regard.

On issues related to peacebuilding addressed in section C of Chapter IV on cross-cutting issues, the United Nations country team which has just taken over from BNUB will have to implement the peacebuilding priority plan for 2014-2016, which is the result of an inclusive process.

With regard to BNUB and its transformation into a country team, addressed in Chapter V of the report, let me recall that the lowering of the BNUB flag took place on 12 December 2014 in the presence of the

two co-Chairs of the ceremony, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, who is present in the Chamber, and Mr. Laurent Kavakure, Burundian Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation. It must be said that this symbolic gesture was the expression of two desires: first, that of the Government of Burundi, which was eager to move forward and fully appropriate the national peacebuilding process, which is now in a mature phase, as has been the case since 2005; and, secondly, that of the Security Council, as expressed in its resolution 2137 (2014) of 13 February 2014.

We rightly acknowledge that BNUB, under the enlightened leadership of Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, has carried out work in political dialogue, protecting human rights and strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government and civil society and has supported the election process under way. The United Nations, of which the Council is a part, can be proud of having contributed to this shared success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7365

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7365th meeting
Wednesday, 21 January 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Today I will briefly update the Council on developments related to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, as well as on my own recent visit to the country, from 15 to 17 December 2014, in continuation of the Secretary-General's good offices.

I would like to begin by clearly stating our alarm. Following weeks of relative calm, the Council meets today amid the worst hostilities in eastern Ukraine since the ceasefire and the Minsk protocol were agreed to on 5 September. Encouraging signs of progress, such as the exchange of hundreds of prisoners, are quickly being overshadowed by renewed fighting and a deepening political stalemate. Ukraine, as well as its neighbours and the broader region, cannot afford the current violent status quo. The escalation of fighting threatens to unravel the Minsk protocol.

While the heavy fighting of the past few days was initially concentrated around Donetsk airport, the numbers of dead and injured, including innocent civilians, are quickly rising elsewhere, as violence spreads throughout the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, including in heavily populated civilian areas such as the city of Donetsk. The conflict is also reportedly inching dangerously close to cities such as Mariupol and Debaltsevo, and endangering areas that until recently have been relatively quiet. In another sign of escalation, reinforcements of fighters are reported on both sides, with the deployment of more sophisticated and heavier weaponry. In Davos today, President Poroshenko stated that there were more than 9,000 regular Russian troops in Ukraine, an accusation that Moscow denies.

On 13 January, as a direct result of the renewal of the fighting, 12 civilians lost their lives and 17 were seriously wounded when their bus was hit in Volnovakha. The United Nations has no means of verifying the facts independently, but after visiting the site three times and conducting crater analysis, the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded that "the rockets that caused craters 1 and 2 had been fired from a north-north-eastern direction" and that

> "the rockets may have been fired approximately 20 kilometres from the point of impact. The SMM is not able to independently verify the point of origin of the rockets or to identify the entity that fired them."

As the Secretary-General stated, this incident, which must be thoroughly investigated and for which those responsible must be brought to justice, is a stark reminder of the urgent need to halt the violence.

Let me also say a few words on the humanitarian situation, which has deteriorated further as conflict has again intensified. A country that until a year ago had no displaced people now has at least 850,000 citizens displaced within its borders and over 600,000 in neighbouring States, according to Ukrainian sources.

Humanitarian actors must have access to do their life-saving work. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to guarantee free and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need, irrespective of where they are located, and they also have to fully respect international humanitarian law. A recent directive with respect to crossing the contact line from Government-held to rebel-held areas could make it exceedingly difficult for humanitarian actors to move aid into areas beyond Government control. It is critical that resources be made available to meet life-saving needs on the ground. The 2015 Strategic Response Plan requests $189 million, and few commitments have been made as yet.

Regrettably, the upsurge in fighting has been accompanied by mutual recriminations between Kyiv

and Russia, and a continued impasse on the diplomatic and political front. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly insisted, there is no substitute for direct and constructive dialogue to move peace forward. The enforcement of a sustainable ceasefire, which presently exists in name only, is both urgent and of primary concern. The line of contact should be observed, and the other elements of the broader Minsk peace plan require expeditious implementation as well. We hope that today's Normandy format meeting in Berlin at the Foreign Minister level will achieve the progress required to return to the implementation of Minsk and to bring together the Normandy Heads of State. Diplomacy has to succeed.

The Minsk agreements offer a solid basis for a resolution of the conflict in the Donbas. There cannot be any unilateral attempt to change their provisions, nor should any party selectively interpret the accords' stipulations. It is our understanding that the apparent differences in interpretation of the Minsk accords are small, but the implications of addressing them in any other way but through dialogue are immense.

In continuation of the Secretary-General's good offices, I returned to Kyiv from 15 to 17 December 2014 to exchange views with President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, Foreign Minister Klimkin and Speaker of Parliament Groisman, as well as international and bilateral partners. With the new Ukrainian Government formed under Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, all interlocutors expressed their conviction that there was no more scope for delay and that deep and overdue economic, legislative, judicial and political reforms had to be tackled immediately.

I assured my interlocutors that the United Nations would never waver in its solidarity with the country. We remain ready to support all efforts to end the fighting so that a durable and lasting peace may prevail, and we will continue to assist the Ukrainian authorities and citizens of Ukraine to usher in the changes that will be vital for a democratic, secure, independent and prosperous future.

In contrast to the present situation, Donbas was relatively calm during my visit. Nonetheless, all of my interlocutors shared the assessment that even if there is progress on the Minsk process, there is no quick resolution of the numerous challenges facing Ukraine, given the deep economic and geopolitical rifts that have been caused by and remain intrinsically linked to the conflict.

All of us — especially the parties to the conflict — have a responsibility to concertedly, and on a most urgent basis, assist in moving from a narrative of confrontation to a narrative of cooperation, and from a logic of war to a logic of peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing, and I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting in view of the recent deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine and continuous violations of the Minsk agreements. Both Russia and the Russian-sponsored illegal militants persist in interpreting the ceasefire in their own twisted way: Ukraine must cease while the militants can continue to fire.

I believe that no one in this Chamber has any doubt that a country under attack would do its utmost to protect itself. In the face of aggression, it is the inherent right of each and every State to defend its land and its people. That is exactly what Ukraine is doing — defending itself in the face of the ongoing attacks against its unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Time and again in recent months, its leadership has sought to salvage the ceasefire with new proposals, new deadlines and new periods of silence. The militants, however, have benefited from Ukraine's restraint by regrouping, rearming and grabbing more land. Since the start of the ceasefire, the militants have captured an extra 550 square kilometres of Ukrainian territory between Donetsk and Mariupol and, according to their commanders, have no intention of stopping.

In spite of the many calls of the international community to close its borders to the illegal flows of arms and foreign fighters, Russia's borders remain wide open to the flow of deadly weaponry and soldiers of fortune. Here is a typical excerpt from the 16 January report of the smm of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):

> "The SMM saw three unmarked trucks towing three D-30 122-mm howitzers on the southern edge of Donetsk city, travelling west past a 'DPR'-controlled checkpoint. Two unmarked T-80 battle tanks were seen by the SMM travelling south-east in Makiivka ... The SMM observed a

> convoy of 21 military-style Ural and KAMAZ trucks, also unmarked, heading south on a highway near Starobesheve ... Four of the trucks carried what appeared to be communication equipment, while the remaining trucks were covered."

Here is another report. In the weekly update for the period of 15-21 January, the OSCE observer mission at Gukovo and Donetsk noted:

> "The OM continued to observe a number of persons in military-style clothing crossing the border in both directions... During the reporting period, the Obersvation Teams observed 396 men and women in military-style dress crossing the border in both directions... Ninety-three percent of border crossings occurred at the Donetsk BCP."

The little that can be gleaned from the two kilometres where the OSCE observer mission is active is clearly indicative of what is happening away from the eyes of the observers. It is no wonder that Russia keeps blocking all attempts to expand the OSCE border observer mission to cover more ground. The Ukrainian sources estimate that as of 15 January, the separatists had 542 tanks, 990 armoured personnel carriers, nearly 700 artillery systems, some 70 Grad rockets and 57 air defence systems.

How on Earth, but for Russia's continued supply, could a ragtag bunch of illegal militants obtain such an impressive arsenal of sophisticated heavy weaponry and arms, which by now could well rival the arsenals of the smaller European States? And where on Earth, but for Russia's continued support, could a ragtag bunch of militants get the millions needed to buy all that heavy weaponry and machinery, especially in an area where the local inhabitants are said to be starving and local hospitals cannot even buy bread for their patients? So much for Russia's claims that it is not a party to this conflict. The war in eastern Ukraine is not a civil war, as some try to portray it, but a calculated and systematic attempt to destabilize Ukraine — a foreign-sponsored war.

Backed by sophisticated weaponry including Grad rockets, artillery systems, modern tanks, armoured personnel carriers, and an influx of foreign mercenaries, the militants continue their barrage of deadly attacks. The past few weeks in particular have seen a disturbing increase in ceasefire violations, including a massive onslaught by the militants on the Donetsk airport. Yesterday again, intensive fighting was reported in several locations, including north-west of Luhansk, where militants destroyed, with massive artillery fire, and occupied one of the checkpoints of the Ukrainian military.

Growing evidence points to a systematic use by the militants of residential areas as a cover for launching Grad rockets and shelling the Ukrainian forces. Overall, since the announcement of the ceasefire on 5 September 2014, Ukrainian forces and civilians have been shelled more than 5,660 times, some 1,500 Ukrainian military have been killed and wounded, and at least 151 civilians have been killed. We look forward to the results of a thorough investigation of the Volnovakha bus attack. We must ensure that perpetrators of this reprehensible act, and all the countless acts of violence and gross violations of human rights, especially around the areas held by the illegal separatist groups, are brought to account.

While every defensive move by Ukraine is blasted by the Russian propaganda as ceasefire violations, Russia has never even once condemned or disowned the illegal and lawless separatist militants. On the contrary. Russia's intentions to rewrite the Minsk agreements in a way that would legitimize and accept the territorial gains achieved by the militants speaks to the Kremlin's wholehearted support for those criminals. Lithuania rejects all calls to renegotiate the terms of the ceasefire. The agreed parameters of the ceasefire already exist and must be respected. We urge all sides, in particular Russia, to engage and fully implement the Minsk agreements in their entirety and without any further delay.

If Russia is genuinely interested in putting an end to the devastating violence and deaths in eastern Ukraine, including the deaths of its own nameless soldiers sent to wage a war against a brotherly nation, it must stop destabilizing Ukraine, stop military supplies to its proxies, stop the illegal separatist groups and withdraw all military equipment. The Ukrainian- Russian State border must be secured. Continuous monitoring by the OSCE must be ensured. All hostages and illegally detained persons must be released, including the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was kidnapped and is being held illegally in Russia.

International observers, including the United Nations and OSCE monitoring missions, must be allowed full and unconditional access throughout Ukraine's territory, including Crimea. International monitors' full, unobstructed access to Crimea remains

particularly important in the light of the continuous deterioration of the situation of the indigenous Tatar community since the annexation by Russia of the region.

My delegation firmly supports Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and will not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea. We urge the Minsk signatories to spare no effort in seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis. We urge Russia in particular to embrace the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and put an end to its destabilizing, expansionist and revanchist policies in the region, including Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus, where, contrary, to Russia's commitments under the 2008 August and September agreements, it is pursuing the annexation of Georgia's Abkhaz and Tskhinvali regions under the guise of the so-called treaties on alliance and strategic partnerships.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. We are grateful for Under-Secretary-General Feltman's unflagging attention to this alarming situation and for the alarm he sounded in the Security Council today in very explicit terms.

As this is the Council's first meeting on Ukraine in 2015, it is our twenty-eighth meeting on the crisis in the past 11 months, far more than on any other situation during the same period. We keep meeting on Ukraine because, despite countless commitments made to the international community to de-escalate — here in the Council and in Geneva, Minsk, Berlin, Normandy and elsewhere — Russia continues to choose a path of escalation and obfuscation. In addition to occupying Crimea, Russia continues to train, equip and fight alongside separatists in eastern Ukraine. Indeed, Russia has so consistently broken its commitments and violated its obligations not to lop off part of another country that some in the Council may begin to accept Russia's behaviour as an unfortunate but inevitable reality, a new normal that would be dangerous for Ukraine and dangerous for international peace and security, because complacency would reward aggression and threaten the basic rules on which our collective security rests.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia continues to train and equip separatists with heavy weapons and to fight by their side, in flagrant violation of the September Minsk agreement, Ukrainian sovereignty and international law. Even as we sit here today, the separatists trained, supplied and supported by Russia are launching a full-scale attack on the strategic city of Debaltseve, inside Ukrainian-controlled territory, in blatant violation of the 19 September Minsk ceasefire lines, in an attemp to gain control of a significant rail juncture. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported yesterday that at least 30 Grad rockets had hit the city on 19 January, killing 3 civilians and wounding 12. The OSCE confirmed that those rockets had come from the direction of the separatist-controlled city of Horlivka. Yesterday, independent media reported that separatists had blown up a rail bridge connecting the port city of Mariupol to the rest of Ukraine. Thankfully, there were no casualties, but now the city must rely on northern access via Donetsk, effectively isolating it and leaving it vulnerable to separatist attacks.

These moves appear calculated and strategic in nature. Since President Poroshenko announced the unilateral silence regime on 9 December, which brought about a brief respite from the violence, separatists and the Russians who backed them have carried out more than 1,000 attacks against Ukrainian positions. Since late December Russia has transferred at least 100 additional pieces of Russian military equipment and materiel to separatists. These latest transfers come atop previous transfers of hundreds of pieces of Russian military equipment to separatists since September, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery pieces and other military vehicles.

The OSCE is allowed to operate at only two checkpoints on the vast Ukrainian-Russian border. Yet from those two checkpoints alone, monitors note hundreds of individuals in military-style dress freely crossing the border every week. The separatists have a larger fighting force, with more weaponry than some European countries. Meanwhile, Russia is reportedly preparing to deliver its twelfth resupply convoy to separatists in Ukrainian territory at the end of the month. If the past 11 deliveries are any indication, Russia will deny international monitors or Ukrainian authorities the ability to fully inspect the convoys. If Russia is indeed sending humanitarian aid, what does it have to hide?

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because separatists continue to harass, threaten and intimidate the impartial monitors deployed by the OSCE, — monitors who serve on behalf of the international community. According to a 14 January OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine

report, the SMM was stopped at a separatist checkpoint in Oktyabr by a hostile separatist commander who ordered the team's car searched and said the monitors would be shot if a camera was found, even though cameras are a basic tool of documentation work. Separatist guards kept their guns pointed at the monitors during the exchange, the monitors said, even though the team posed no threat and, mercifully, had no camera.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia continues to break commitments it has made to the escalades. Ukraine and the international community have launched several serious efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, including through the trilateral contact Group on Ukraine, the Minsk agreement, the Normandy group and other negotiating forums. We continue to believe that there can be no military solution and that political negotiations are key. Yet, time and again, Russia's words promise peace while Russia's actions make war. Time and again, President Putin has extended an olive branch in one hand while passing out Grad missiles and tanks with the other.

The current situation is dangerous. It is dangerous because Russia's actions are directly contributing to a humanitarian crisis. With each passing day, more civilians are killed and maimed. Many of us have seen the ghastly images of the 13 January attack on a passenger bus, which was struck while waiting at a Ukrainian security checkpoint at Volnovakha. Indelible images of the blood-soaked snow alongside the bus, of its blown-out windows and the gapping holes left in its seats and curtains, of the gory steps to the back entrance of the bus — these images are unforgettable. Thirteen civilians were killed in that attack and at least 16 more people were wounded.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission said in a 17 January report that it had

> "conducted a comprehensive inspection, focusing on five craters caused by explosions that had occurred during the incident. The investigation included comprehensive crater analysis of two specific blast craters, including the crater located 10 metres from the side of the passenger bus. In the SMM's assessment, all craters examined were caused by rockets fired from a north-north-eastern direction."

The conclusion of the impartial OSCE monitoring mission is that the craters at the crime scene were caused by rockets fired from the north-north-east direction from the checkpoint. That area is controlled by Russian-backed separatists, and multiple open-source reports have shown separatists firing Grad rockets from the territory to the north-north-east of Volnovakha. The same day the bus was struck, the SMM reported hearing Grad rockets fired from several other separatist-controlled areas. At first, separatists bragged on social media about the strike on the Ukrainian security checkpoint. Vut the postings disappeared after it was reported that a busload of civilians had been hit.

For every attack on civilians that makes headlines, there are dozens more, no less deadly, that go unreported. Since the conflict began, more than 10,000 people have been injured in the conflict. Nearly 5,000 people have been killed, approximately 800 of them since November when the Council last met to discuss the Ukraine crisis (see S/PV.7311). One of the attacks that did not make news occurred on 11 January. According to the SMM, mortars struck two houses in the Government-held town of Hranitne, wounding a girl. She died of her injuries before she reached the hospital — she was three years old.

Those are some of the reasons why the Russians' most recent efforts to blame Ukraine ring so hollow. On Thursday, President Putin issued a last-minute invitation to President Poroshenko to discuss a new Russian-conceived so-called peace plan — a plan that would free Russia from the commitment it made in Minsk to withdraw its fighters and return control over the international border to Ukraine. The plan would seek to legitimize territorial gains made by separatists since September, as well as Russian personnel and military equipment on the territory of Ukraine. We have seen peace plans like that before in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria. When President Poroshenko did not accept Putin's offer, Russia immediately launched a diplomatic and media blitz, claiming it was proof that Ukraine was not interested in peace. Let us pull the veil away from Putin's peace plan and call it for what it is: a Russian occupation plan.

We need to implement the peace plans we already have — peace plans Russia has signed and broken. If Russia is serious about peace, it should follow through on Minsk, to which it had agreed more than four months ago. If Russia wants to end the conflict, the steps they must take are the same as they were on 5 September 2014: remove all military equipment and personnel from Ukraine; stop backing the separatists; allow unimpeded OSCE monitoring; return control

of Ukraine's international border to the Ukrainian Government and release all hostages, including those being held in Russia, such as Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. We understand Ms. Savchenko has been on hunger strike for nearly a month to protest her detention and is suffering serious health problems. Yet Russia has taken none of the steps set out in Minsk.

In contrast to Russia, Ukraine has consistently taken steps to de-escalate the crisis, demonstrating measurable progress on several key commitments made in Minsk and passing key reforms to reduce corruption and grant greater authority to its regions. In September and December, President Mr. Poroshenko announced unilateral ceasefires on the part of Ukrainian forces, resulting in brief but significant decreases in violence. Yet peace cannot be made unilaterally. Where Ukraine has been forced to respond to cynical attempts by the separatists and Russian forces to use the ceasefires to gain additional territory, the Ukrainian forces have tried to hold the agreed line.

Of course, the Ukrainian Government must abide by international norms, even as it defends its land and its people. We are concerned by the European Council's report on abuse in Ukrainian prisons, and we urge the Government to conduct thorough, impartial investigations into its findings, as well as to develop a plan to address them. We take seriously reports of the alleged use of cluster munitions in populated areas. All sides should take every feasible precaution to prevent any loss of civilian life, including by indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas.

There is a broader reason it would be dangerous to accept Russia's actions as the new normal. We have seen this playbook before. Before eastern Ukraine we saw it in Crimea, and before Crimea we saw it in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and before that in Georgia and Transnistria. The end-game in all of those Moscow-manufactured crises has been identical: to gobble up parts of neighbouring countries and to create frozen conflicts. And Russia is consistently working to put those frozen conflicts under a deeper freeze. In recent weeks, for example, at the same time that Russia was flouting its Minsk agreements, President Putin was putting the finishing touches on another set of agreements, the so-called "treaties of alliance", with de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Those treaties will compound years of violations of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

What is frozen in these conflicts? Instability is frozen. Violations of sovereignty are frozen. Militarization is frozen. In sum, all of the problems that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, were created to address, are frozen. If Russia succeeds in achieving its aims, if we allow this behaviour to become the new normal, this will not be the last time Russia uses this well-worn playbook.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council holds a large number of meetings on a number of worthwhile topics in this Chamber. We use many beautiful words about the need to peacefully settle political crises, about the impossibility of a military solution, about the rule of law, democracy and the inclusiveness of political processes and about human rights and the primacy of the protection of civilians in conflict. However, after discussing Ukraine here about 30 times, the question arises as to how well-aligned the declarations are with the situation in the country. Are they directly applicable, or are they provided just for the sake of eloquence, to be discarded when political suitability takes precedence? Are all of the resolutions and presidential statements adopted here relevant for such a country as Ukraine?

The Russian Federation is ensuring full compliance with the Minsk accords to settle the Ukrainian crisis. We take that into account during contacts with the sides, including the leadership of Ukraine and the rebels and representatives of interested foreign countries, including under the Normandy format. Unfortunately, Kyiv botched the 16 January meeting of the Minsk contact group: the Ukrainian representatives did not show up at the Belarusian capital.

The situation on the ground has recently worsened significantly, with the Donetsk airport becoming the epicentre of clashes. Despite the fact that, in line with the Minsk agreements, the airport was to have been given to the militias, the matter has not been resolved peacefully because of disputes in other areas of the engagement line. Ukrainian armed forces have continued to shell Donetsk and other populated areas, leading to a large number of civilian casualties.

On 15 January, the President of Russia sent a letter to the President of Ukraine regarding the need to rigorously implement the silence regime, as well as about the need for a swift withdrawal of weaponry from the engagement line, in accordance with the Minsk agreements, based on coordinates that were insisted

upon by the Ukrainian side — I stress that — as well as a timetable with a list of actions for the sides regarding the the withdrawal of each type of conventional and reactive artillery, also in line with time frames put forth by Ukraine.

The Russian side expressed its readiness to bring its influence to bear on the militias to ensure that the option was adopted in good faith and to avoid civilian casualties, and suggested providing assistance to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) regarding monitoring of the implementation of those steps. I underscore that the letter was sent in accordance with a request discussed during telephone contacts between Russian and Ukrainian leaders. However, instead of appropriately responding to the proposal, the Ukrainian side resumed artillery shelling of Donetsk.

The current escalation of the situation in Donbas is hardly fortuitous. Over the entire time of the ceasefire, the Ukrainian side violated the Minsk agreements by stepping up its military presence in the south-east of the country, there was a strengthening of militarization and regrouping, as well as new waves of mobilization appeals from Kyiv to avenge the defeats of 2014.

At the same time, a number of countries actively supporting the "war party" in Kyiv irresponsibly provided Ukraine with military-purpose items. It is clear that the events of recent days are yet another attempt by Kyiv to resolve the internal political conflict militarily, which will definitely lead to exacerbating the crisis of the State of Ukraine and numerous civilian casualties. Ultimately, it is fraught with catastrophe.

Many times here in the Chamber, we have pointed to the fact that those who come to power as a result of a coup d'état — the so-called Government of the victors — and while enjoying support from armed radicals are conducting a policy that has nothing in common with establishing a country of national unity. Kyiv has cast aside all instruments concerning a political settlement of the internal crisis. The 21 February agreement signed by Yanukovych and the opposition on the establishment of a Government of national unity had become a dead letter by the next day. The Geneva statement of 17 April, providing for swift and comprehensive constitutional reform involving all regions and political forces, was ignored. The road map of the Chairman of the OSCE was rejected. Has anyone here heard anything about the inclusive national dialogue referred to in the Minsk protocol?

The first thing that the forces that came to power after the coup in Kyiv did was to forge ahead with decisions aimed at restricting the rights of linguistic minorities and suffocating dissidents. Despite the fact that half of the country speaks in Russian, almost all Russian-language media were closed down, Russian television broadcasts were forbidden and the political forces representing the Russian citizens in south-east Ukraine were intimidated or simply banned. The south-east and south saw horrific crimes be committed, which have not yet been brought to light or seriously investigated. On 2 May in Odessa, dozens of people were burned alive in the House of Trade Unions building. On 9 May, Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War, in Mariupol, civilians were shot. And at the beginning of in July there were again airstrikes in Luhansk.

The nature and dynamics of the crisis in Ukraine are difficult to understand without an understanding of the ideological undercurrents. Last year, 14 October was declared a public holiday in Ukraine — the day of the establishment of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army — which fought on the side of the Nazis. That is an all-out glorification of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators and misanthropes Bandera and Shukhevych, who have the blood of tens of thousands of Soviet and Polish citizens on their hands. Bandera gave indiscriminate orders to execute his opponents on a massive scale, in particular on grounds of nationality. Let me recall Bandera's words: "I will kill every Pole from 16 to 60 years of age". Shukhevych so instructed his followers:

> "Do not bully; destroy! Fear not that people will curse us for cruelty. If only half of the Ukrainian population of 40 million remains, there is nothing wrong with that!"

Now incendiary marches, in the style of the Waffen-SS, with portraits of the so-called "heroes of Ukraine" are held completely openly, with the approval of the Kyiv authorities.

Honestly, the Ukrainian people deserve better heroes. The people of eastern Ukraine view this as Americans would feel if in the United States the founding day of the Ku Klux Klan were proclaimed a national holiday and its members marched in Washington, D.C., with burning crosses and formed detachments to be sent to other areas of the country to put things in order.

However, speaking on German television, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk lamented the fact that during the Second World War "the Soviet Union invaded Ukraine

and Germany". Apparently, he would like Ukraine to remain under Nazi occupation even today. Still, enlightened Europe kept silent on the matter. Indeed, it is very strange that those who claim to be civilized can tolerate such a subversive ideology. This is the ideology guiding Kyiv's so-called "anti-terrorist" operations, which are, in reality, punitive operations. Aircraft, heavy weaponry, artillery, banned cluster and phosphorus munitions, tactical missiles and multiple rocket launchers are being used against cities in the south-east. The confirmed death toll is approaching 5,000. Refugees and internally displaced persons number in the millions. In the city of Donetsk alone, more than 1,000 houses have been destroyed. Many small towns and other inhabited areas have been totally destroyed. There have been strikes against residential areas and infrastructure, with total disregard for international humanitarian law and basic moral decency. Even major western non-governmental organizations, which hardly sympathize with the militia, say that the Ukrainian security forces do not distinguish between military and civilian targets.

Kyiv reacted immediately to a terrible incident that occurred on 13 January involving a passenger bus in Volnovakha, leveling charges at the militias without any investigation or trial. However, according to the conclusion of the OSCE Mission, the firing came from the north-north-east direction, which is an area where it is dubious rebels could be. The Ukrainian Government is using this tragedy to the full extent so as to incite militaristic hysteria.

The very next day, the Ukrainian brass stepped up artillery and bomb strikes against the cities of Donbas, resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians, including women, children and the elderly. A bus stop was hit yesterday, resulting in two deaths and 11 serious injuries. Those are just the latest such incidents.

A Russian television station on the ground said that today in Donetsk eight civilians had been killed and 30 wounded, including children. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian newspaper reported that today five civilians had been killed and 29 wounded. The websites of Ukrainian militias say basically the same thing. In the city of Stakhanaov, Luhansk district, up to 10 citizens were killed today as a result of salvoes from multiple rocket launchers. However, no one in Kyiv is conducting funeral marches. It would seem that the fallen are going unnoticed.

A significant military force in the south-east is made up of the so-called "volunteer battalions", which are funded by Ukrainian oligarchs and answer to no one. Some of them openly use Nazi symbols. The Kyiv authorities, while constantly referring to the unity and territorial integrity of the country, have not taken a single step towards genuine national dialogue or constitutional reform with the participation of all groups and regions. Moreover, Kyiv is doing everything to cut off the south-east in practical terms. A decision has been made to withdraw all State institutions and terminate payments from the budget, including welfare and pensions. The movement of persons and goods is limited along the lines of engagement. Since 12 January, transportation between Ukraine and Luhansk has been at a standstill.

The humanitarian situation is catastrophic. Just last summer, we raised this issue and proposed that the Council adopt a draft resolution in this regard. Some members of the Security Council, unfortunately, did not heed our call. They hushed up the topic, waxed poetic and squabbled about the number of victims required to qualify the situation as a "humanitarian crisis". Today there is no room for demagoguery. United Nations humanitarian actors view the situation as a full-scale crisis calling for a presence on the ground, clusters for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and financing humanitarian appeals.

They have recently reported a deterioration in the situation regarding the delivery of aid due to further obstruction from the Kyiv authorities. Russia is providing significant humanitarian assistance to Donbas, in spite of the controversy that some members of the Council have attempted to raise in this regard. At the same time, we continue to seek agreement with Kyiv, in spite of its obstruction, on the conditions for the provision of such supplies. We give timely information regarding sending humanitarian convoys and cargo. Aid is also going through various channels. Russia has just decided to contribute $5 million to the World Food Programme's humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine.

The Minsk agreement, signed in September by Kyiv and representatives of Luhansk and Donetsk with the mediation of the OSCE and Russia, laid the groundwork for a peaceful settlement. There is a need for the swift resumption of practical work with the contact group for their full implementation. For our part, we are doing out utmost to ensure that the next

meeting in Minsk will take place as soon as possible. We urge all responsible members of the international community to put pressure on the Ukrainian authorities to move away from confrontation and bring to an end its policy on the forced suppression of the south-east. They must understand that the most pressing need now is to launch direct Ukraine-wide dialogue to discuss the constitutional makeup of the country, which should be comfortable and safe for all citizens without exception.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chilean presidency for its initiative to hold this debate. I would also like to thank Mr. Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

Chad is concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, in particular in the areas around Donetsk and Luhansk, in the east of the country, where, following a period of relative calm, tensions have been on the rise since the beginning of 2015. Exchanges of fire and violent confrontations broke out around the airport of Donetsk on 29 December 2014, resulting in a number of victims, including Ukraine soldiers and separatists. That constitutes a serious violation of the ceasefire under the Minsk agreements of 5 and 19 September 2014.

We deplore this return to violence, including the firing of rockets on 13 January at a bus near Volnovakha in eastern Ukraine, resulting in the death of at least 12 civilians, most of them women. To that, we must add the violent clashes of the past 48 hours, which have caused several deaths among Ukrainian troops and civilians. Chad firmly condemns the return to violence. We call upon the parties to respect international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Chad takes note of the adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament, on 20 January, of a law for the partial mobilization of approximately 50,000 reservists to the army in 2015. However, we remain convinced that the solution to the Ukrainian crisis will be political and that it largely depends on the willingness of Ukrainians themselves to undertake a genuine negotiating process to arrive at a lasting peace. In that respect, Chad calls upon the parties to show calm and restraint and urges the Government to establish a direct and inclusive national dialogue in order to bring about national reconciliation.

Ukraine's civil war sadly took a very high toll in 2014 in terms of lives lost. More than 4,800 were killed, to which we must add the 298 victims of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, which was shot down over eastern Ukraine in July. There have been 10,300 injured, including 300 children, and more than 1 million displaced.

In the light of this human tragedy, Chad encourages the international community to increase and diversify its mediation efforts aimed at relaunching the peace process in Ukraine. We would also call upon countries that wield influence with the parties to exert the necessary pressure in the pursuit of peace in Ukraine with full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Often in the corridors of this Organization, there is talk of being weary of the issue of Ukraine because of the many meetings that have been held on the subject, both in the Security Council and the General Assembly. I would like to state very clearly here that Spain will never tire of defending the unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is why we feel that it is important that the Security Council continue to very closely follow developments in the situation.

We heard with great concern the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Feltman, who qualified the situation on the ground as alarming. That alarm is justified, as just yesterday the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met and made the same observation about the situation on the ground.

Spain of course supports the OSCE activities and the efforts of the trilateral contact group aimed at bringing about an effective ceasefire and implementing the pending elements of the Minsk agreements. The Minsk protocol and memorandum continue to be the fundamental reference points; they should not be reinterpreted. All efforts aimed at a return to the path laid out by the Minsk agreements would be welcome. We therefore hope that the efforts undertaken in recent days in the Normandy format and within the trilateral contact group will continue to make progress.

As I said, we are extremely concerned by the escalation of the situation on the ground. We believe

that it is essetnail that all signatories to the Minsk agreements reaffirm the ceasefire's validity.

With regard to the civilian population, I would say that preventing their suffering is an indispensable and urgent task. We need to guarantee an effective distribution of humanitarian aid. The European Union has shown and will continue to demonstrate itself to be an asset in that regard. We have thus far provided €76 million in aid and are working to increase that amount. Of that, 40 per cent has been allocated to the inhabitants of the conflict areas controlled by the rebels. I would also like to say that there is a clear risk of humanitarian assistance being used for the wrong reasons, and we need to work together to establish a mechanism, perhaps within the trilateral contact group, which would seek to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to its rightful recipients.

Finally, we would stress that any lasting and sustainable solution must include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is the crux of General Assembly resolution 68/262 and the essential message that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Mr. García Margallo, will convey to the Kyiv authorities when he travels to the region on 8 and 9 February. That will be one of his first trips since the start of Spain's non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would start by thanking Mr. Feltman for his briefing. We have heeded his warning regarding the deterioration of the security situation in Donbas over the past few days. Fighting has resumed with an intensity that we had not seen in Ukraine for several months, especially around what remains of the Donetsk airport.

What is urgently needed now is to achieve a de-escalation in order to put the political dialogue back on track. The parties must understand that there can be no military solution to the conflict, which has already claimed over 5,000 lives and which entails significant costs for Ukraine, Russia and the European Union.

Only the full implementation, in good faith, of the Minsk agreements by all parties will provide a way out of the crisis. Every effort must be made to achieve that goal.

France remains fully mobilized with a view to achieving a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict, and in that context supports all international initiatives that share that goal. Minister Laurent Fabius is in close contact with his German, Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. Today in Berlin, there have been further exchanges between the Ministers under the Normandy format.

Our objectives, as recently recalled by the French President, are clear and consistent: respect for the ceasefire; the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line; the settlement of humanitarian issues; and, eventually, the election of new representatives in eastern Ukraine.

Yesterday, the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in which Russia and Ukraine are represented, adopted a political statement calling for a de-escalation and the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. That is also a step in the right direction. But beyond mere words, and above all, we now need concrete and verifiable action.

The Security Council, which last year dealt with the Ukrainian crisis on more than 30 occasions, should support those efforts and participate in the search for a lasting solution. The risk of the crisis spreading within Ukraine and beyond should not be underestimated. Ukraine must therefore remain at the heart of the Security Council's priorities.

However, for that same reason, we also want to open a new chapter in 2015 to find a way out of the spiral of confrontation, and we want to do so without abandoning our principles. Nothing can undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its international borders.

The situation is now, paradoxically, clearer than it was a few months ago. The parameters necessary for an end to the crisis are now known to all — namely, the Minsk agreements. Against all odds, and despite alternating periods of violence — as we see now — and quiet, that road map was upheld until last week. It is not challenged by the parties.

Its implementation remains very difficult. The discussions in the contact group are too slow and only lead to modest results. That is due to the significant distrust that prevails between the Russian and Ukrainian parties. That state of affairs must be overcome, and we must encourage each party to have the courage to get involved.

Upstream, there is now a mechanism for validation and political impetus: the Normandy format. It seeks

to encourage parties to go further and takes note of the progress made.

However, much remains to be done, as the situation on the ground today makes tragically clear. We must move forward if we want diplomatic dynamics to prevail over violence and chaos. It seems clear to us that Russia is reluctant to engage openly and lastingly to normalize the situation. The recent violence is further evidence of Russia's capacity to fuel tensions even as a diplomatic process begins.

We also call on Ukraine to launch a process leading to institutional reforms giving Donbas greater autonomy while respecting the sovereignty of Ukraine. We call once again on Russia to stop the transfer of arms and individuals across the Russian-Ukrainian border. We call on Russia to bring all of its influence to bear on the separatists to ensure that the ceasefire is fully upheld.

Securing the Russian-Ukrainian border remains vital to emerging from the crisis. Convoys coming from Ukraine, the European Union and, of course, Russia must all be deployed in accordance with Ukrainian law.

Our policy is based on firmness and openness to dialogue. This holds in New York as elsewhere. Our resolve is unshakable alongside our European and American partners.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend our thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his comprehensive briefing.

Jordan expresses its concern vis-à-vis the accelerating deterioration of the situation in Ukraine. The crisis has reached dangerous proportions, and the Security Council and the international community must therefore work harder than ever before to resolve the crisis. More than 4,700 people have died so far and more than 1 million have been displaced to other regions within Ukraine and neighbouring countries as a result of the conflict in the east and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation there, especially in basic economic and health services. This is in addition to the flagrant and systemic violations of human rights being committed. We do not need to reiterate them at every meeting, but to affirm that they must come to an end.

That is why we call on all parties to show self-restraint and to immediately stop using force so as to salvage the peace process through a return to peaceful negotiations in order to avert any further escalation, which would only lead to more violence among the parties to the conflict.

We reiterate that there is a need to stop the escalating use of provocative language among the parties so as to give reason and dialogue a chance. Jordan reiterates its belief that it is important to respect the borders of Ukraine as well as its sovereignty and territorial integrity, not to interfere in its internal affairs, to restore security and calm to the border areas, and to stem the flow of foreign fighters and weapons to the separatists.

Instability in Ukraine will be bad not only for Ukraine but also for all the countries of the region and beyond, and the negative political and economic impact will affect the whole region. That is why we feel that we must take practical steps to comprehensively implement the Minsk accord for peace both in letter and in spirit. That is the political framework that was agreed by all parties with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace.

We also call on the Ukrainian Government to continue with its reform programmes, especially in the public and justice sectors, and to see that justice is done by holding accountable those who have committed crimes, including those who have used explosive weapons, and bringing them to justice, as well as completing e the trials that were begun for some of them.

We affirm the need to take every possible measure to protect civilians, provide basic services for citizens and implement the human rights strategy that was charted out for the next five years.

Finally, Jordan values and supports all efforts to bring about peace and to restore stability and security to Ukraine, including the efforts made by European leaders and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its observers, as well as the efforts of Kazakhstan to host a Quartet summit at the end of this month. Jordan looks forward to that summit and to the urgent meeting of the Minsk Contact Group. We hope that the two meetings will lead to a positive outcome and that a solution will be reached that is satisfactory to all parties.

We also call on the parties to show a genuine commitment to use this opportunity to work to pacify the situation in Ukraine and to bring about lasting peace.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I welcome the briefing today by Under-Secretary-General Feltman following his recent visit to Ukraine. The worrying surge in violence over the past week underlines the grave threat that the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to pose to international peace and security.

We were all shocked at the deaths of at least 12 civilians in Volnovakha earlier this month and by reports of hospitals being shelled in Donetsk. We have seen yet more reports of Russian personnel and equipment crossing the Ukrainian border. Among this, we have heard the usual pattern of Russian denials and misinformation.

It is clear, just as it was when we last met, in November (see S/PV.7311), that Russia's actions continue to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, violating international norms and flouting the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The humanitarian impact of these actions is also clear. Over 1 million people have been displaced from their homes. As winter deepens, the situation will only get worse, with the elderly, the young and the infirm all increasingly vulnerable. The separatists must allow Ukrainian humanitarian convoys to enter the regions they control, and Russia must stop using its unilateral humanitarian convoys as cover to supply those separatists with arms.

The human rights situation gives equal cause for concern, with human rights violations reported in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and a total breakdown in law and order in areas under separatist control.

Against this deteriorating context, it should dismay us all that repeated calls for a ceasefire and for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity have not been heeded. All sides must engage in constructive dialogue and bring about an end to violence in eastern Ukraine. Russia must take steps to withdraw its equipment and troops from Ukraine, cease its support for the separatists and effectively control its borders.

Despite persistent claims to the contrary, the evidence of Russia's support is beyond denial. Two days ago, two companies of Russian troops, including up to 30 armoured personnel carriers and a dozen tanks, were seen crossing the border into Ukraine. Daily we see Russian soldiers operating alongside the separatists. We see separatists brandishing the PKP, Russia's newest machine gun. We have also seen Russian-supplied T-72 BM tanks in the streets of Luhansk and Donetsk. Neither the PKP nor the T-72 BM is used by the Ukrainian armed forces.

The consequences of the situation in the Donbas continue to hurt both the people and the economies of Ukraine and Russia. But there is a political way out: through implementation of the agreements that were reached in Minsk in September. However, despite a number of diplomatic initiatives, including today's Normandy-format meeting, more than 1,000 people have been killed since those commitments were made in September, and separatists have taken control of a substantial additional area of Ukrainian territory since the September agreements.

Indeed, any analysis of the implementation of the Minsk agreements lays bare the manifest failure of Russia and the separatists to implement 10 out of the 12 commitments made on that occasion. In particular, Russia's refusal to implement two key provisions continue to undermine the prospects for peace in Ukraine.

First, at Minsk, all sides agreed to secure continuous monitoring on the Ukraine/Russian border and verification by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) of the creation of a security zone in the border regions of Ukraine and Russia. Despite the best efforts of the OSCE, whose work has been exemplary despite the challenges presented, only two checkpoints are currently monitored on the Russian side, leaving hundreds of kilometres free for the flow of weapons and personnel into Ukraine. If it is serious about Minsk, Russia must stop blocking the expansion of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

Secondly, at Minsk, all sides agreed "to remove illegal armed formations, military equipment, fighters and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine". Yet hundreds of Russian troops still remain on the territory of Ukraine, as do thousands of so-called volunteers, in flagrant violation of the protocol. The withdrawal of those forces is fundamental to the Minsk agreement and the only way to secure the future territorial integrity of Ukraine.

It is important that the Council continue to pay the closest attention to the situation in Ukraine and insist on further progress towards the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia has chosen not to uphold its commitments and pursue this path to restoring stability.

And Ukraine, sadly, is not the only case. Russia has made an agreement with a breakaway Georgian province of Abkhazia and is in the process of doing the same with another Georgian region, South Ossetia. This demonstrates a pattern of Russian interference in the domestic affairs of its neighbours and a blatant disregard for their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We call on Russia to exert its influence over separatists, cease the destabilizing activities and work in good faith to find a political solution. The Minsk agreements provide the framework for that solution. They must be implemented in full and without delay.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

The current situation in eastern Ukraine remains turbulent, with an increase in armed clashes and acts of violence resulting in human casualties and the destruction of property. China is deeply worried and concerned about the situation. The top priorities now are to effectively and comprehensively implement the Minsk agreements by all parties concerned, to stay calm and exercise restraint, to prevent further escalation of the conflict and confrontation and to achieve as soon as possible a ceasefire and cessation of violence in eastern Ukraine.

China believes that a political solution is the only way to settle the Ukrainian issue. The crisis in Ukraine is rooted in complex historical facts and contemporary causes. A fundamental solution of the Ukrainian issue lies in fully taking into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of all regions and ethnic groups of Ukraine, while addressing the reasonable concerns of all the parties involved so that their interests can be balanced.

China welcomes and supports the recent positive efforts of the relevant parties to push for a political solution to the Ukrainian issue and hopes that they will join hands, fully take into account the legitimate interests and reasonable concerns of each side and, through such mediation mechanisms as the Normandy and Minsk formats, and find a comprehensive, balanced and lasting political settlement as soon as possible in order to achieve peace, security, stability and development in Ukraine, as well as in the region as a whole.

It is China's long-standing position to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. We support all actions conducive to the holding of dialogues and consultations in search of a political solution to the Ukrainian crisis. We will maintain our just and objective position by playing a positive and constructive role in finding a political solution to the Ukrainian issue.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this informative meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine. We also welcome Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and thank him for his briefing on the current situation in Ukraine.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. We advocate a political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis to be brought about constructively in accordance with the norms and principles of international law.

We are firmly convinced of the need to put an end to the hostilities in south-eastern Ukraine as soon as possible. We reject the acts of violence and ethnic and political persecution and the acts of terrorism regardless of who commits them.

Direct negotiation is the most appropriate means for achieving that goal, and there should be no interference in matters under the domestic jurisdiction of States, be they military, political or economic.

Venezuela stresses that the mediation of regional organizations is the path to a negotiated settlement of the conflict. In that regard we support the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Germany and France aimed at promoting dialogue among Ukraine, Russia and the representatives of the Donbas region. We hope that the recent political meetings will help to bring about a ceasefire that will lead to lasting peace in strict compliance with the Minsk agreements.

Venezuela believes that the parties should act with moderation in order to avoid the dialogue being affected by unilateral actions that could jeopardize the peace process. In that regard, our country rejects the application of unilateral coercive sanctions, which are contrary to international law and counterproductive to the desire for peace and stability in the region, as they erode the necessary climate of trust between the parties.

We also believe that any incident on the ground should be investigated in an independent manner, with evidence being provided that supports its conclusions.

We must avoid a military escalation and the spread of the conflict. All efforts should be made to address the historical and root causes of the crisis in order to achieve a strong and lasting peace that includes all parties involved.

We call upon the parties to strictly observe the commitments concerning the protection of civilians in the areas affected by violence, including the need to ensure access to humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, refugees and others living in the areas affected by the conflict.

Finally, we call on all parties to redouble their efforts in the search for a just and lasting political solution, which is in everyone's interest and in the interest of the entire region.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. My delegation extends its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his in-depth briefing.

Malaysia shares the grave concern expressed by Under-Secretary-General Feltman and other Council members on the deteriorating situation on the ground in the east of Ukraine. As expressed by the Secretary-General on 18 January, the severe escalation in fighting, especially at the Donetsk airport, has threatened to unravel the September 2014 ceasefire. With a view to immediately de-escalating the situation, Malaysia calls on the conflicting parties to cease fighting and adhere to their commitments to implementing the Minsk protocol and memorandum in their entirety. A military solution would not be sustainable and would not benefit anyone.

The Ukraine crisis has claimed far too many casualties. Close to 5,000 people have been killed, while over 1 million have been displaced. Malaysia is deeply saddened by the recent tragic shelling of a bus transporting civilians on 13 January in the Donetsk region, which caused the death of 12 and injured many more, among them women and children. Malaysia calls for an independent investigation into the incident to hold the perpetrators accountable. That latest incident is yet another instance of senseless killing as the escalating conflict in eastern Ukraine claims more and more innocent victims.

After the downing of MH-17, which killed 298 civilians and shocked the world last summer, Malaysia hoped that the tragic incident would push the conflicting parties to de-escalate the situation, cease fighting and engage in a dialogue to reach a political solution to the conflict. Instead the conflict has been prolonged and grown more intense since then, claiming more and more casualties, and causing a humanitarian crisis.

It is our conviction that adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is of paramount importance in maintaining international peace and security. In particular, we affirm our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs, as espoused in the Charter. In this regard, Malaysia condemns any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, which has brought about the crisis, and views such threats as a violation of the United Nations Charter.

Malaysia calls for constructive engagement on all sides and urges the conflicting parties to continue to explore all possible avenues to find a peaceful solution. Malaysia supports every peaceful effort, including international diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the situation in Ukraine. We call on all parties to respect the rule of law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, to act responsibly and to aim towards finding a peaceful settlement. Malaysia stands ready to play a constructive role towards de-escalating the crisis and resuming talks to restore Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity. We hope that both sides will adopt a moderate approach and find a mutually acceptable solution. The interest, welfare and security of the people of Ukraine must be given top priority by all parties.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing. Nigeria is deeply concerned that despite the various efforts aimed at resolving the crisis in Ukraine, the situation on the ground has not changed. The fighting between Government forces and separatist rebels continues unabated and has indeed intensified.

In our pronouncements on the crisis in Ukraine, we have consistently called for a political solution that adequately addresses the concerns of the separatists while preserving and fully respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. That remains our position. We urge the parties to work in

good faith towards overcoming the current stalemate in the implementation of the Minsk agreement, which Nigeria sees as providing a credible and workable framework for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): The recent escalation of violence in Ukraine is a very serious threat to what were at best, even before that escalation, fragile steps towards a peace. The Under-Secretary-General's report that there is a mounting alarm at the situation, particularly the humanitarian situation, is one with which we can only agree. New Zealand therefore continues to be deeply concerned about this conflict, and particularly its implications for core principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as territorial integrity and the prohibition of the threat or the use of force. The conflict has so far led to an unacceptable loss of life, especially that of civilians. More than 1 million people have been displaced from their homes, and they now face a very harsh winter.

Examples of the impact of this tragedy on innocent citizens abound. The destruction within the past 24 hours of a major bridge into Luhansk, while no doubt a military objective, also impedes desperately needed humanitarian relief, and that is totally unacceptable. We urge therefore close cooperation among all relevant parties, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations.

It is a particular concern that the conflict continues despite the clear and unequivocal commitments recorded in the Minsk protocol and memorandum. We call on all parties to fully implement their commitments under those agreements, including an immediate and full cessation of all hostilities, with a clear definition of the line of contact between the parties. We also call for the continued release of detainees. These conditions must come into effect immediately to allow the resumption of productive diplomatic discussions, especially the planned summit-level consultations. And those consultations are now of great urgency. It should be clear to all of us that this crisis cannot be resolved by the use of force. A sustainable political solution must be found.

We continue to read with alarm reports indicating the involvement of Russian troops and materiel in the conflict, and urge both Russia and the pro-Russian separatists to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We also call on Russia to use its influence, as its representative just told us it has done before, to ensure that pro-Russian separatists fully respect the ceasefire.

We welcome the mediating role of the OSCE, and we encourage it to continue its efforts to end the fighting. However, we also believe that this Security Council must live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. It has already been pointed out that in 2014, the Council met no fewer than 27 times to discuss the situation in Ukraine; but so far, we have seen very little impact from all of that high level attention.

And so it is that at this the 28th meeting New Zealand affirms that the Council is properly seized of the matter and calls for a more purposeful Council engagement with a real focus on supporting efforts to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. Only then will we see tangible outcomes for those most affected — the people of eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): We welcome the convening of this meeting this afternoon, and thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for the very in-depth briefing that he provided to the Council.

The crisis in Ukraine has serious consequences for the political, economic and social stability of its people, and we agree that all peaceful means must be found to resolve it. The Minsk agreement signed in September is an important basis for a settlement as long as all the parties concerned can demonstrate the political will to make it a reality, in spirit as well as in letter. We know that a round of negotiations was scheduled for this afternoon in Berlin between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany. It is our conviction that it will be possible to reach a negotiated solution if the parties have the political will. That would certainly be a welcome development for the Council at the beginning of a new year and with the restart of our deliberations on this crisis.

The humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine is deplorable, and it is unacceptable that so many people continue to be killed, maimed and deprived of food, clean water, housing and other essentials of human life, especially given the extremely cold winter they are living through.

Finally, Angola appeals to all the parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict to use their intelligence to find possible solutions to safeguarding international peace and security in this conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chile.

We thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

I would first like to say how deeply concerned we are about the new escalation of the crisis in eastern and southern Ukraine, particularly around the Donetsk airport. We deplore the worsening security situation, which has had serious consequences for the civilian population, who continue to suffer violations and abuses of human rights inflicted by all sides.

We urge the parties to comply fully with the ceasefire, as monitored and verified by the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, pursuant to the provisions of the Minsk accords. We are confident in the full ability of all the parties to implement the agreement, which is an inclusive political instrument designed to achieve peace and tranquillity for the entire population of eastern Ukraine. We urge all the parties to pursue the high-level dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and to exercise restraint and refrain from unilateral actions that could exacerbate tensions. We hope that the Minsk contact group can deliver positive results in the coming weeks.

Until a permanent peaceful solution is found, humanitarian assistance should be provided without delay and in accordance with humanitarian principles. The efforts of the international community must be channeled through the host Government, which has primary responsibility for aiding and protecting its people.

We emphasize the continued importance of strengthening the rule of law and the obligation to respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 68/262 and international law, as well as respecting the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of another State.

Lastly, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's continued efforts to end the situation that Ukraine is enduring, and we hope that the various independent international mechanisms will continue to contribute to resolving this crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your effective leadership of the Council for the month of January. Since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor this year, I would also like to congratulate the new members — Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela — on their election to the Council. I am grateful to you, Sir, for convening this meeting, and would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

It has been almost a year since the events of February and March 2014, when the Russian Federation manipulated two of the basic principles of the United Nations — the right to self-determination and the right to protection — in order to create a fake legal pretext for invading Ukraine. As a result, it occupied and then annexed part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Sooner or later the Russian Federation will be brought to justice for that particular crime of aggression against Ukraine.

As of today, the Russian Federation is continuing its military aggression in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine by sending military units into our territory, delivering heavy weapons to the local terrorist groups, training, equipping and financing mercenaries and waging an information war. That aggression is aimed at forcing my Government to change its constitutional and territorial order, thereby undermining the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of Ukraine.

Every day of the past year has been traumatic for the Ukrainian people. On 8 June, militants from the so-called Donetsk People's Republic tortured and killed eight priests and parishioners of the Protestant church in the Ukrainian city of Slovyansk. On 17 July, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was brought down from a zone controlled by the terrorists. Last week, on 13 January, terrorists fired on a passenger bus near the Ukrainian town of Volnovakha, killing 13 and wounding 15 Ukrainian civilians. The ongoing investigation of that tragic terrorist attack on civilians near Volnovakha, and the relevant conclusions of the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, prove that the shelling was carried out from the north-north-eastern areas currently occupied by illegal armed groups. I would like to take this opportunity to express Ukraine's

appreciation for the Council's strong condemnation of that terrorist act. My country is waging a war against terrorism. It is fighting on the front lines for such universal values as freedom, sovereignty and democracy.

In the wake of the Minsk agreements of 5 and 19 September 2014, the President of Ukraine declared a ceasefire and began to implement all points, without exception, of the agreement signed by the representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the rebels. Despite the fact that they are signatories to the agreements, the Russian side and Russian-backed terrorists have persistently and brutally violated the Minsk provisions. With Russia's backing, and in breach of the Minsk arrangements, the illegal armed groups have occupied more than 550 square kilometres since September. As a result of the terrorists' lack of compliance with the ceasefire regime, during this period Ukraine has lost 237 military troops and at least 148 civilians. In contravention of the ceasefire regime, the shelling of Ukrainian positions has increased. In particular, in the past 10 days alone the total shelling has surpassed the numbers for the whole of the previous month.

Since signing the Minsk agreements in September, the Russian side has significantly increased its military presence in Donbas and has filled the region with highly sophisticated heavy weapons. The terrorists recently announced that they have created their own air force. We presume that is a manoeuvre to cover up the future deployment and use of Russian military aircraft in action. The build-up of Russian troops at the Ukrainian border has also increased and has now reached 50,000.

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to say a few words in Russian.

(*spoke in Russian*)

What is a battalion of the 76th Airborne Division from Pskov doing in the residential areas of Heorhiivka and Komachova? What is a battalion doing in the residential areas of Pobeda and Hryhorivka?

(*spoke in English*)

A battalion is around 400 or 500 men.

(*spoke in Russian*)

What is a separate air-assault brigade from Ulyanovsk doing in the area of Starobeshevo? There is a battalion from the 76th Motorized Brigade from Maikop and the 49th Brigade from Stavropol. What are armed units from Volgograd, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Shilovo, Yurga, Aleysk, Gusinoozyorsk, Pecheneg, Sputnik, Novorossiysk, Tula, Naro-Fominsk and elsewhere in Ukraine? These amount to more than 8,000 troops. Are they on vacation, as we have heard many times in clarification from the Russian side? Do their families know where they are?

(*spoke in English*)

Russia officially denies sending troops, but the Russian families of troops killed tell a different story. What is this if not aggression? We again draw the Council's attention to the fact that the illegal armed groups intensified their attacks and shelling after receiving reinforcements from the territory of the Russian Federation, including in the form of Russia's so-called humanitarian convoys. We denounce the provocative statements made by Russian officials, who have tried to shift responsibility for violations onto Ukraine, including those which the Russian delegation has made to the Security Council today. I do not have any intention of continually commenting on or of repeating the disinformation concerning the implementation of the Minsk agreements by my Government or the measures the Government of Ukraine has taken to meet the needs of the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas. Recently, we helped disseminate information on that issue to all members of the Security Council.

Even despite the intensification of foreign aggression, Ukraine remains fully committed to a peaceful settlement of the crisis, which should be based on the Minsk agreements and on full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political unity of Ukraine. We have twice initiated a ceasefire and unilaterally adhered to it. On 13 November 2014, representatives of Ukraine and Russia signed a working document envisaging a clear schedule for the implementation of the provisions of the Minsk agreements, in particular concerning assurances of the bilateral ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and return to the touch-line. The Russian side recalled its signature under that document.

On 18 January, Ukraine once again reiterated its appeal to the Russian Federation and suggested that Russia should sign the timetable for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as worded on 13 November 2014, and to ensure that the ceasefire would start on 19 January. We believe that it will allow us to immediately resume the ceasefire and to protect civilians from the attacks carried out by the militants in the region in

the course of the past four months. The beginning of the strict implementation of the document will create appropriate conditions for holding consultations of the trilateral contact group in the near future, and later the summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in Astana. We demand that the plan be finally implemented.

As was stated by the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, despite the escalation of pressure and the activation of terrorists, Ukraine is ready to sign the ceasefire agreement, given our full adherence to the Minsk agreements. Ukraine is striving for peace. We still expect the same commitment to the Minsk agreements on the part of the Russian side. After all, it is the President of the Russian Federation who has repeatedly confirmed his adherence to the implementation of the Minsk agreements in their full scope and without exception. That position was affirmed, inter alia, at the multilateral summit in Milan.

We sincerely thank all our partners for their solidarity with us at this crucial time for Ukraine, Europe, the Security Council and the world. We thank those who have expressed strong support today for the release of the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savachenko, who is illegally detained in Russia.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make an additional statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before the beginning of today's meeting, we were supposed to hold closed consultations to consider whether or not the Security Council could make a contribution to settling the Ukrainian crisis. However, as colleagues have complained to us, the delegation of the United States showed its hand, and we know why. It was to create yet another propagandist controversy. The representative of the United States went beyond the Ukrainian topic and made a number of inappropriate insinuations regarding Russia's policies. That is why we need to talk about the United States policy.

Throughout the Ukrainian crisis, the United States has played a destructive and — if we are to speak frankly — a provocative role. After every visit of high-ranking United States officials to Ukraine, the Kyiv Government has stepped up the confrontational nature of its activities, and the current military escalation horrifically coincides with the visit to Kyiv of the commander of the American forces in Europe. It is surprising that wherever Washington, D.C., turns its gaze — be it Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, everywhere — we see destabilization, crises and bloodshed. Perhaps the United States believes that Europe does not have enough problems and that the eastern part of the continent needs a long, drawn-out crisis. It would seem that some European capitals — though not yet all, as demonstrated by today's discussion — have begun to understand where things are going.

Ms. Power and other colleagues talked about certain conflicts that occurred as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union, and for some reason blamed Russia for them. I recall that the conflict in Transnistria could have been settled back in 2005 if Washington, D.C., had not intervened at the last moment, convincing Chisinău not to sign the prepared agreement. Abkhazia, in South Ossetia, would not have declared its independence if in 2001 Washington, D.C., had not provoked an eruption of the already unbalanced regime of Saakashvili.

I now come back to the subject of Ukraine. During today's discussion, we have heard a number of specific grievances against Russia. I would recommend that colleagues carefully study the text of the major press conference held in Moscow today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of our country, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, and that they reread my statement.

In regard to the statement made by the Ukrainian representative, I have only one thing to say. In all our many discussions in the Security Council, the Ukrainian delegation has never uttered a respectful word and has actually been insulting when referring to the south-eastern part of his country. He uses the terms "bandits" and "terrorists". Sometimes the Ukrainian political elite calls them "inhuman" or "insects". I have yet to hear my Ukrainian colleagues raise the subject of inclusive political dialogue. While the Kyiv Government does not seem ready to take this up, it is now time to do so with political courage and to understand that there is no other way to keep Ukraine whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I certainly understand the desire of the representative of the Russian Federation to speak about other conflicts and other crises, rather than the situation and their tactics of continuing to support the separatists who are

wreaking havoc in Ukraine. It seems that while Russia continues the same tactics of supporting the separatists in Ukraine, it also continues its same tactics in the Council — distracting and demonstrating a repeated preference for fantasy over fact.

So let us be clear. It has been claimed that the Russian Federation is striving for implementation of the Minsk agreements. In fact, Russia and the separatists it supports have taken practically no steps to implement the September Minsk agreements. For example, attacks are continuing past the agreed ceasefire line. Weapons, heavy artillery and military personnel continue to flow across the border from Russia to the separatists. The border remains unsecured and hostages are still being held, including on Russian territory.

Meanwhile, Ukraine has taken great strides to implement the provisions of the 5 September Minsk protocol, including twice declaring a unilateral ceasefire as separatists continued to fire. It has been claimed that Ukraine is building up its military presence and resorting to militarization. In fact, Ukraine is attempting to hold the ceasefire line agreed to on 19 September. The fact that the Russian-backed separatists have decided to ignore the line and try to take additional territory does not provide a basis to renegotiate that line. The line should not be renegotiated because the separatists have gained additional territory through repeated ceasefire violations since September.

It has been claimed that the Donetsk airport, under the Minsk agreements, should be under the control of the Russian-backed separatists. In fact, according to the 19 September Minsk agreement, the line of contact should go straight through the Donetsk airport and the agreement stipulated that all forces would draw back at least 15 kilometers on both sides of the ceasefire line. The airport would have remained neutral territory had the Minsk agreements been properly implemented. The 19 September agreement laid out specific coordinates. There should be no confusion that cannot be resolved with a GPS.

The representative of the Russian Federation claims that Ukraine will not respond to President Putin's latest proposal. In fact, there is no need to renegotiate a new peace plan or a new ceasefire line. The September Minsk agreements, which provide for a cessation of fighting, permanent international monitoring of the border, the removal of all Russian equipment and personnel from the Ukrainian territory, the release of all hostages, and increased autonomy for the region within Ukrainian law, remain the best path to de-escalating the conflict.

What the Russians seem to be doing is not to implement Minsk, but to redraft the line of control articulated in it. Russia and the separatists it supports should fulfil the commitments they made in September, rather than attempt to reopen negotiations while increasing the level of violence and attacks to change the facts on the ground. We need more facts, less fantasy. We need more implementation of Minsk, not more distractions from it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I understand that Ms. Power decided that she had not been eloquent enough in setting out the American position, and that her Deputy needed to repeat some portions of her statement. I regret that Ambassador Power has decided not to continue this principled discussion with us on matters of international policy.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I apologise for taking the floor again, but my country has been mentioned several times in the past few minutes. I will make a few comments on the so-called national dialogue on decentralization in Ukraine and the humanitarian situation.

As my colleague said, yesterday morning we sent to all members of the Security Council — including the Russian Federation — information on the social and humanitarian situation in Donbas and the measures taken by the Government of Ukraine to meet the needs of the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas. Everything is contained in that paper, so I do not know why the Russian colleague has told the mistruth that we are not commenting on Ukraine's policy of inclusiveness. It is up to those present to decide.

On mobilization, yes, we are in the process of reforming our army, which was fully destroyed in recent years. Why are we doing that? Because of the facts expressed today — the enlargement of the Russian military presence in in Donbas, Ukraine, with thousands of Russian nationals and sophisticated weaponry.

We have a right to defend ourselves. That is why we are doing so, ourselves. Based on the United Nations principle of collective self-defence, we have called on many countries and organizations for assistance. It has not been easy to get a response; we have not received any weaponry equal to the Russians'. That is why we are doing what we are doing to defend ourselves. It is our right.

As to the issue of Ukrainian citizens, the paper I mentioned is addressed to the Ukrainian citizens in Donbas who are under the terrorist threat. Who are we calling terrorists? Those who killed the passengers of Flight MH-17, those who killed priests and those who killed civilians are terrorists and they would be considered terrorists anywhere, whatever their nationality or the threat they represent. We are participating in the common fight against terrorism. They are terrorists and they are called by that name because their actions identify them as terrorists.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7366

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7366th meeting
Thursday, 22 January 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Blyth
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 28 October 2014 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/762)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-01988 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 28 October 2014 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/762)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/43, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/762, which contains a letter dated 28 October 2014 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2196 (2015).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m

United Nations S/PV.7367

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7367th meeting
Thursday, 22 January 2015, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/956)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/957)

Letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/19)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-01994 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/956)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/957)

Letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/19)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/956, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to document S/2014/957, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014).

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/19, which contains a letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Her Excellency Mrs. Dina Kawar, Permanent Representative of Jordan, in her capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank Council members for giving me this opportunity to brief them on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), a task that the Council entrusted me with pursuant to resolution 2147 (2014) and that has taken quite a lot of time over the past months.

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation for the support and assistance provided by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo throughout this important exercise. This was demonstrated by the time accorded to us while our delegation was in Kinshasa by several Congolese ministers, led by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo. There were several meetings, each one lasting several hours, which is a testament to how seriously the Government has taken the review. I would add that I myself had many meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General spoke with President Kabila Kabange over the phone and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Martin Kobler had a long meeting with President Kabila Kabange over the past weekend.

Throughout all those meetings, we had an opportunity to discuss with the Congolese authorities a wide range of issues, including the political situation, security challenges and the upcoming elections. We agreed that over the past years much has been accomplished: the withdrawal of foreign armed forces, the reunification of the country, the establishment of the transitional Government and two national elections. And yet challenges remain. In spite of our military defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars at the end of 2013, armed groups — both Congolese and foreign — remain, in particular the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces

(ADF). Those armed groups continue to pose a threat to the civilian population and the overall stability and development of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to the Great Lakes region in general.

First, allow me to mention what happened in the past few days with regard to the troubling incidents related to the electoral process in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu and Lubumbashi. I would like to express our deep concern about the violence that occurred during those events and to deplore the loss of lives, the destruction of property and the acts of looting. The Congolese have the right to express their opinions and demonstrate peacefully. Clearly, the use of violence is unacceptable. Of course, demonstrators and their leaders must be urged to pursue political objectives by non-violent means. However, we are concerned by reports of security forces using force against peaceful, unarmed demonstrators and by reports of arbitrary arrests. It is the responsibility of the Government to maintain a political space and allow for the peaceful expression of opinions. The Government must also ensure that the response to such violent protests is proportionate. Furthermore, the fact that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ordered Internet sites, text messaging services and radio stations to shut down is a source of concern, as the freedom of expression and communication are essential rights in a democracy and should not be curtailed.

Throughout the discussions I mentioned earlier that we had with the Congolese authorities, we discussed at length the threats facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We discussed the role of MONUSCO and the size of its military and police components. Overall, our assessment was that MONUSCO continues to play an important role in stabilizing the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in supporting the Government in neutralizing armed groups. However, it is true that have heard some criticism about how the Mission is implementing certain aspects of its mandate, specifically the performance of some of its contingents. We take those criticisms seriously, and the report before the Council contains a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring that MONUSCO becomes more effective in implementing its mandate and achieves more tangible results. It should be noted that this also includes a recommendation by the Secretary-General for MONUSCO to intensify dialogue with the Government on a number of key policy issues.

With regard to the military component, at the meeting held yesterday with the troop- and police-contributing countries, I conveyed a very clear message: that the changes necessary to more effectively implement MONUSCO's mandate will not happen merely through a transformation of the MONUSCO force. What is necessary beyond that is a change in the behaviour of the troop-contributing countries deployed on the ground. All of the contingents must be ready and willing to use armed force against those who continue to pose a threat to the civilian population, and this resolve must be translated into action in a more proactive manner. Of course, it is clear that the protection of civilians cannot be limited to military action only.

The Secretary-General has therefore recommended a reduction in MONUSCO military personnel by 2,000 troops and the replacement of the two formed police units that were deployed to South Sudan early last year. His recommendation is based on the relative improvement in the security situation in some parts of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo following the military defeat of the M-23. It is also based on the fact that there has been an improvement in the capacity of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) to address the threat posed by armed groups. It is also based on a number of concrete measures that were taken to make the Force more mobile and more flexible.

It is true that President Kabila and his Government are advocating for deeper personnel cuts. Their view is that maintaining the numbers proposed by the Secretary-General, that is, a cut of 2,000 personnel, would send a negative signal. But, as I explained to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, that recommendation by the Secretary-General is based on an in-depth military capability study and troop-to-task analysis. Considering the numerous political and security challenges that remain, we think that any reduction beyond the recommended figure would have negative implications for the ability of the Force to implement its mandate.

The protection of civilians remains MONUSCO's core mandated task. That requires a strong military component that is able to flexibly and effectively undertake the military aspects of a protection-of-civilians strategy, until the Government forces have the capacity to take over the tasks that have been entrusted to MONUSCO. MONUSCO also has, as the Council is aware, the mandate to neutralize armed groups, which is now more than ever our key priority. To implement that unique mandate, we need adequate capacity

and specialized capabilities, in particular in view of operations against the FDLR and the ADF. I reiterate that military operations against the FDLR must start now. We must also recognize that achieving tangible results in the fight against the FDLR will require both resources and time, considering the dispersed nature of the armed group and its immersion within the local population, so, again, it will take time. We will also have to be careful to avoid any repetition of what happened in 2009, when the FARDC had undertaken military operations against that group, which led to devastating humanitarian consequences.

This, however, does not mean that MONUSCO should stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo indefinitely. We are ready to hold discussions with the Government to develop jointly a plan that would make it possible for the Government to progressively take over the tasks that we are currently performing. MONUSCO's exit strategy must be progressive and tied to specific criteria and targets jointly developed with the Government. Over the past 15 years we have made considerable investments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I think that it is in our collective interest to ensure a gradual withdrawal, without reversing the hard-won gains achieved thus far. Neither the United Nations nor the Government can do this in isolation. The Secretary-General has therefore recommended that MONUSCO and the Government enter into a strategic-level dialogue to develop an exit strategy and road map in the coming months.

We would be happy to work with the Government in order to enable it to implement a strategy that could be accelerated, provided that conditions allow it. Ultimately, the solution to the problem is in the hands of the Government. MONUSCO's drawdown will depend on the Government's commitment and ability to make tangible progress on neutralizing armed groups, in particular the FDLR and the ADF; on building the capacity of the army and the police in a sustainable manner; and its capacity and resolve to hold credible elections that would contribute to consolidating stability in accordance with the Constitution.

Let me conclude by underscoring that we have come a long way and that a great deal has been achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular since the signing almost two years ago in Addis Ababa of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We are on the right path, but more efforts are needed from all of us to achieve what is in our common interest and our common goal: durable peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. That will require translating the political commitments agreed at Addis Ababa two years ago into concrete action, now more than ever, in particular with regard to the neutralization of armed groups.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Kawar.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan): I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my statement, I intend to briefly highlight some of the findings and recommendations in the final report of the Group of Experts (see S/2015/19) issued pursuant to resolution 2136 (2014) and touch upon the Committee's consideration of the report during its meeting on 9 January. I also intend to briefly highlight the activities of the Committee since my most recent briefing to the Council, on 20 August 2014, in connection with the midterm report of the Group (see S/2014/428) and set some of out the possible activities that are being considered by the Committee during the course of 2015. As the Group of Experts' final report was made available as a Security Council document on Monday, I intend to highlight just a few of the Group's findings here today.

With regard to the sanctioned entity Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Group considers that a recent military operation significantly weakened but failed to defeat the ADF. The Group is of the view that ADF still has the potential to regroup and rebuild, as it did during similar operations in 2005 and 2010, particularly since its recruitment, support and finance networks have not been significantly affected. The Group also did not find credible evidence that ADF has, or recently has had, links to foreign terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab or Boko Haram.

With regard to the sanctioned entity Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Group of Experts noted that the armed group's leadership had failed to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the disarmament process. The Group documented the FDLR's involvement in military operations, recruitment and collaboration with other armed groups

and elements of the national army, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC). The Group also established that FDLR leaders and some of their international political supporters had been meeting outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo since at least 2013, and documented FDLR's engagement in the local-level taxation and exploitation of natural resources, sometimes in collaboration with FARDC units.

In the report, the Group also notes that the ADF, FDLR, Nduma Defence for Congo, led by sanctioned individual Sheka Ntabo Ntaberi, and other armed groups continue to recruit, train and use child soldiers in 2014. Armed groups also committed a variety of other abuses, including torture, enslavement and sexual violence. There were mass killings in June in Mutarule, South Kivu, and in October and November 2014 in Beni territory, North Kivu.

The Group also observed that, while there had been progress on traceability and due diligence efforts concerning minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, smuggling continued. In addition, elements of the FARDC and some armed groups remain involved in the minerals trade, potentially introducing conflict minerals into the supply chains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States. According to the Group, there was virtually no progress in addressing the smuggling of gold from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2014. The illegal exploitation of, and trade in, wildlife products, including ivory, remains a serious problem, involving armed groups, elements of the Congolese army, local poachers and armed bands from South Sudan. The FDLR and elements of the army remain involved in the production and trade in charcoal and wood in North Kivu.

Among its 15 recommendations, the Group of Experts proposed that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and several other Governments exchange information to ensure that gold was traded in compliance with international transparency and due diligence standards, namely, by requiring full documentation, including a certificate of origin.

The Group also recommended that the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi investigate and prosecute reported acts of sexual violence and abuse by the Burundian army and/or the Burundian Imbonerakure militia group in the Kiliba area of South Kivu, and that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo investigate and prosecute FARDC officers and soldiers cited in the report who violate the mining code.

In their consideration of the Group's recommendations and the proposed actions by the Committee in connection with the recommendations, the members registered their preliminary agreement with many of the proposed actions, such as letters addressed to a number of States highlighting the Group's recommendation to investigate individuals identified in the report who were involved in the finance, material support and recruitment networks of the ADF. Those draft documents were circulated on Tuesday to the Committee under the standard five-day no objection procedure. With regard to several recommendations where there was no clear agreement from the floor regarding the proposed actions, such as a hold, the Chair intends to conduct further bilaterals with interested delegations to see whether a flexible approach can be found to the manner in which the Committee conveys the Group's recommendations to the relevant Member States.

Since my last briefing to the Council on 20 August 2014, in connection with the Group's midterm report, the Committee held informal consultations on 17 September to hear a briefing by Mr. Abdallah Wafi, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Rule of Law, on the sanctions monitoring mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), in particular weapons marking and tracing, which, in my view, is a key component to the identification of arms embargo violations. At the same meeting, the Committee also heard briefings by Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and by Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, at which time both representatives put forward names for possible sanctions designation. A press release was issued following that meeting.

In terms of the Committee's possible activities this year, it would be the Chair's desire to visit the Great Lakes region, hopefully during the middle of 2015. Prior to that time, I have asked members of the Committee for their views in terms of possible interlocuters who could deepen the Committee's understanding of the implementation of the sanctions regime. In

that connection, the Committee is taking forward my proposal to convene a meeting with States in the region following the publication of the Group of Experts final report as a Council document. To that end, letters to the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and South Africa, in its capacity as Chair of the Southern African Development Community, will be transmitted in connection with the proposed meeting of Friday, 6 March, of the Committee with the invited States. We also value the engagement of Angola in its capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and a member of the Sanctions Committee in the Council.

It would also be my intention, with the agreement of the Committee members, to invite the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to speak with the Committee regarding the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also believe that the Committee would value the insights of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler or the relevant MONUSCO representative on the Mission's sanctions monitoring mandate. The Committee could also consider a possible briefing by the Chair of the African group of Member States here in New York to discuss the implementation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime.

The date of 12 March 2015 will mark 11 years since the Security Council established a Sanctions Committee to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo. It is my hope that, during the course of this year, through the Committee's meetings with the regional States and their other interlocuters and through my visit to the Great Lakes region, we may be able to step back and assess the effectiveness and impact of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime and consider some very important questions. What, for example, can be done to improve weapon stockpile management and combat networks that supply arms and ammunition to armed groups, in violation of the embargo? How can we stop the recycling of ex-combatants from one armed group to another existing or new armed group? What sort of impact is being felt by the 31 individuals and nine entities whose names are on the sanctions list? What further information do Member States need in order to propose additional names for sanctions, including those who support armed groups through the illicit trade in natural resources, including gold, wildlife and wildlife products, as well as those who continue to recruit children and sexually abuse women?

We must make sure that Member States, particularly those in the region, are cooperating with the Group of Experts and the Committee by answering its letters, facilitating its visits and implementing its recommendations. I trust that this year we will collectively acquire a better appreciation for the commitment given to implementation of the sanctions regime, and of the action can be taken to address any gaps or deficiencies. I am aware of the challenges before us, particularly the differences in views in the region about who bears the greatest responsibility for violating the embargo. Let us engage with their interlocutors by hearing their views and providing assistance as necessary, and, ultimately, let us strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the civilians who have borne the brunt of the suffering, deserve no less.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would first like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over today's Security Council meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to welcome the fact that the representative of Chile is steering the Council for the month of January. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you, on my own and my delegation's behalf, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I also commend your predecessor, the representative of the Republic of Chad, and express our appreciation for the mastery and skill he showed last month during his presidency. And, finally, I would like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom my country is indebted for the outstanding efforts that have been made to effectively restore peace in the Great Lakes region in general and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular.

I will focus on three key topics covered in the reports before the Council: the Secretary-General's report of 30 December 2014 on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2014/956), his report on MONUSCO submitted pursuant to paragraph

39 of resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/957), and the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/19).

In resolution 2147 (2014), adopted on 28 March, the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General conduct a thorough strategic review of MONUSCO and the entire United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and submit to it, by 30 December, his recommendations on MONUSCO's future objectives, activities, exit strategy and efficient deployment of resources, keeping in mind that the Mission's effectiveness should continue to increase. My delegation hopes that our exchanges in this and subsequent meetings will enable us to reach a consensus between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council on the progress that has been made towards normalizing the situation in the country, the obstacles that still clutter the road to normalization and thus demand our urgent collective attention and, lastly, on future action by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We can never emphasise strongly enough that the long-suffering peoples of the countries in our region see the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region as eloquent proof of the international community's determination to help find a definitive solution to an instability that has lasted all too long and for which my country in particular has paid a heavy price. That was evident when, as soon as the Framework agreement was signed, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo began working to meet its obligations, which are in fact the same vital and high-priority tasks we have known about for the past 11 years.

In that context, we have accelerated and systematized our security sector reform. Recent concrete actions undertaken to make the defence of our territory more effective and the State's authority more solid include rationalizing the structures and personnel of the army and security and police services; recruiting young Congolese from every province of the country into the defence forces; reopening military academies; and training special forces and support units with the help of bilateral partners with the primary aim of making our rapid reaction force operational. I note that in November 2014, in order to consolidate that State authority, with the help of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team, we began implementing stabilization strategies and action plans in North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu provinces. The Government also welcomes the choice of 13 priority areas for intervention as part of the revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. In that regard, MONUSCO's creation of new islands of stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, located in Katanga, North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu is an encouraging initiative that my Government wholeheartedly supports.

Decentralization, as provided for in the Constitution, has taken another step forward with the adoption of the laws needed to implement it. Reform of the management of public finance, which has been under way for several years and whose positive results are apparent in the overall stability of the economy, is still ongoing and has been usefully supplemented by the entry into force of measures designed to improve the business climate and the national mechanism for certifying mining resources, which in turn will strengthen economic growth. Even better, the Government has just completed a thorough review of its document on strategy and growth for poverty reduction, aimed at making growth more inclusive, partially reducing the delays that have accumulated in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring that the fight against poverty is more credible and effective.

In that regard, we see as particularly crucial elements the economic recovery and rehabilitation and social integration components of our stabilization and reconstruction programmes, particularly the stabilization and reconstruction plan for areas emerging from armed conflict and the programme developed by the United Nations country team, designed to consolidate and develop the northern and western regions that, though they have not seen conflict, are still having to deal with the consequences of the instability in the north and east. We are therefore counting on the active involvement of the United Nations and the international community in those programmes' funding and implementation.

In the wake of the reform of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and the enactment of various relevant laws, my country is resolutely committed to the process leading to the holding of democratic elections for the third time. The Government is determined to meet the challenge of organizing them peacefully and in a way that ensures that they will be free and democratic. The unfortunate events that took place in Kinshasha over the past few days, to which Under-Secretary-General Ladsous

referred earlier and which should be viewed as part of the learning experience on the road to democracy, will not hinder the organization of those elections, the calendar of which is to be published by CENI, which is constitutionally mandated to manage them.

With regard to these events, I note that during the 2011 elections, various partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the opposition made suggestyions that CENI deemed useful to include in the new electoral law enacted by Parliament. Those suggestions included promoting gender awareness and counting the votes of Congolese abroad. The events were the result of the manipulation of the country's population by an opposition party.

When we consider the security situation that prevailed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo just two years ago, this analysis gives us grounds for great satisfaction. Major progress has been made in reducing threats to the security of the population and in improving the conditions under which the Government can assume responsibility for that security. We legitimately believe that we are emerging from the phase of restoring and keeping the peace. From that point of view, we should look at future objectives and the MONUSCO withdrawal strategy.

After 15 years of United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we should give credit to the partnership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations, the international community and regional organizations for, among other things, the withdrawal of foreign armed forces, the reunification of the country, the establishment of the transitional Government, and the holding of two national elections.

Fifteen years is a significant amount of time. We believe that we are jointly responsible for assessing the United Nations actions in our country to support the Government in order to ensure that they remain relevant to the goals we have set and the emerging challenges we face. We agree with the Secretary-General that frank discussion between the United Nations and the Government of my country is necessary to reach a compromise without endangering the progress achieved on the ground. My Government would like the Security Council to engage in such a discussion instead of making a unilateral decision.

The ultimatum issued to the Forces démocratique de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) rebel group to lay down its weapons and demobilize for voluntary repatriation ended on 2 January. The forced disarmament of that Rwandan rebellion by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, in cooperation with the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade, is now a military issue. The impatience seen among a number of partners is shared by the Congolese people and their leaders. The mere 25 per cent of FDLR combattants who laid down their arms to enter transit centres is not at all satisfactory to my Government. Forced disarmament remains the only option at present. It will take place as soon as possible and in the most appropriate fashion, bearing in mind all the parameters that are open to our defence and security forces.

We recall that FDLR is not an army in the traditional sense. These are fighters without distinctive markings who hide behind a human shield made up of our compatriots and Rwandan civilian refugees. It is therefore up to the army to adapt its entire strategy to that reality on the ground. At this time, the national imperative for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to put an end to the presence in the country of FDLR combattants, who are a threat to peace not only in their country of origin, but also and above all in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where they have committed many criminal acts against our country and its population for over two decades.

It is generally agreed today that assistance to a country in a post-conflict situation like my own must be based on the priorities of that country and its real needs in order to make it possible for the population to legitimately benefit from the dividends of peace. The Democratic Republic of the Congo recognizes that it needs lasting peace in order to respond to the challenges of building a well-functioning, strong and prosperous State that cares for the rights of its citizens and is able provide for their needs. We therefore expect a great deal from the United Nations, which undeniably has the ability to assist in strengthening public institutions. All that we ask is that we be treated as responsible adults able to assume the prerogatives of our recovered sovereignty.

The keywords for the future of our cooperation are "dialogue" and "partnership" based on the principle of ownership by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the secondary role of international cooperation. We recognize that to be effective, ownership requires strengthened national capacity.

To conclude, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and the representative of Jordan for their briefings. I would also like to thank the members of the Security Council for all of their tireless and very welcome initiatives to re-establish peace in my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite the members of the Council to proceed to consultations on this same topic.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7368

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7368th meeting
Monday, 26 January 2015, 1 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 1.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Throughout the conflict in Ukraine, and repeatedly in recent weeks, the Secretary-General has called for de-escalation, restraint and the protection of civilians. We deeply regret that these calls appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

In just five days since we last met on 21 January (see S/PV.7365), close to 50 civilians have been killed and nearly 150 have been seriously wounded. On 22 January, over a dozen civilians died when rockets hit their trolleybus in Donetsk city. The same day, at least 10 civilians were killed amid heavy fighting in the city of Horlivka. On Saturday, 24 January, a barrage of attacks with multiple rocket launcher systems hit the city of Mariupol, destroying buildings and impacting a market filled with civilians. Dozens of people lost their lives, including women and children, and over 100 were wounded. The Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported, based on crater analysis, that the rockets originated from territory controlled by the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic".

Mariupol lies outside of the immediate conflict zone. The conclusion can thus be drawn that the entity that fired these rockets knowingly targeted a civilian population. This would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. We must send an unequivocal message — the perpetrators must be held accountable and brought to justice.

On 23 January, the leader of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic announced a boycott of future consultations with the trilateral contact group, a unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire and threatened to seize further territory, with a plan that includes pushing the front line all the way to the borders of Donetsk oblast. As the Secretary-General stated on 24 January (SG/SM/16485), this constitutes a violation of their commitments under the Minsk accords. We call directly on the rebels to immediately cease their provocative and violent actions, to abide by international law and to make good on their commitments. We also urge the leadership of the Russian Federation to use its influence to call on the rebels to cease hostilities immediately. This will be a critical step in stopping the bloodshed.

The Ukrainian leadership has been vocal about its commitment to the Minsk accords and has asserted that it remains in a defensive position. However, we note the recent emergency measures adopted by the National Security and Defence Council, particularly those in relation to "strengthening counter-terrorism measures", and appeal for the application of maximum restraint. In light of the just-declared state of emergency in Donbas, it has never been more important to guarantee humanitarian workers and goods full and unhindered access. Bureaucratic hurdles on both sides of the conflict line are impeding humanitarian access and must be eased. We also call on the Government of Ukraine to ensure that humanitarian operations are free from taxation.

We recognize the difficulty of diplomatic discussions aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to this conflict, given entrenched positions. Nonetheless, efforts to find a political solution must urgently be redoubled. President Poroshenko's announcement that an agreement has been reached on the necessity of holding negotiations in the Geneva format, with the participation of the European Union, the United States, Ukraine and Russia, is welcome.

Before I close, let me share our assessment of the way forward, with an emphasis on reviving the Minsk accords. As agreed at Minsk, all sides must immediately cease hostilities, with the onus particularly on the rebels to recommit to the ceasefire and back down from their offensive. We sincerely hope that the trilateral contact

group will reconvene in consultations with rebel leadership, as envisaged this week, to work towards a sustainable ceasefire and the implementation of the broader Minsk accords. Most importantly, all sides must commit to the protection of civilians and letting assistance reach those in need.

Finally, there must be full political recommitment to a peaceful and lasting solution to this conflict at the highest levels. I reiterate our encouragement of a convening of the Geneva format at the earliest opportunity. The United Nations also remains ready to support the consolidation of a sustainable and lasting peace process, as may be required. Over 5,000 lives have already been lost in this conflict. We must find a way to stop it, and we must do so now.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this urgent meeting on the situation in Ukraine. Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing and insights into the current situation.

Lithuania condemns in the strongest terms the attacks on Mariupol and extends its sincere condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives or have been injured during these attacks.

The bloodiest conflict in Europe since the Balkan wars is taking place as we speak. Last Wednesday in this Chamber (see S/PV.7365), the Security Council members once again expressed concern at the situation and urged all parties to the conflict, including Russia, to return to the Minsk agreements and ensure their prompt and full implementation in order to prevent even more destruction and bloodshed. Alas, what we saw over the weekend was more deadly shelling, more destruction, and more human tragedy caused by the Kremlin's unbridled mercenaries, including the deadly attack on Mariupol, which this Council failed to condemn because Russia put protecting the militants above condemning the perpetrators.

After 29 open briefings and no progress on the ground, it is hard not to sound repetitive here. However, we cannot let Ukraine fall through the cracks of international attention. More than 5,000 dead, some 11,000 injured and about 1.5 million displaced — such is the cost of Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine. Almost 50,000 people have fled their homes since 14 January; at least 262 people were killed between 13 and 21 January alone. Last week again, from 75 to 115 shelling attacks on Ukrainian positions took place every day. The Donetsk airport, which the Kremlin-sponsored militants captured last week, has been pounded to rubble by months of attacks, causing destruction seen only in the worst of wars. Some 550 square kilometres of land have been captured by the illegal militants since the beginning of the ceasefire. Such are the realities of what we continue to call a ceasefire.

Just like the breaches of the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, the 1997 Black Sea Fleet Agreement Between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and various other documents, including the more recent the Geneva statement and the Berlin joint declaration, the Minsk agreements are just another casualty of Russia's aggression against neighbouring Ukraine.

One does not seek peace by arming illegal fighters in a neighbouring country with advanced artillery systems, multiple rocket launchers, truckloads of arms and ammunition, and tanks. One does not seek peace by sending one's own troops and commandos to fight on the soil of one's neighbour. One does not seek peace by issuing continuous threats and intimidations vis-à-vis one's neighbour, or by annexing parts of the neighbour's territory. One does not seek peace by unleashing a continuous barrage of hate-mongering propaganda and lies aimed at dehumanizing and demonizing one's neighbour. As long as Russia persists on this course, let us be frank, peace in Ukraine has no chance.

Last Saturday, Ukraine suffered the second deadliest single incident on its soil since the downing of flight MH-17 in July 2014. Some 30 people were killed and about 90 wounded during the shelling of the city of Mariupol. The Under-Secretary-General spoke of the militants withdrawing unilaterally from the ceasefire. In the days preceding the attack, Alexander Zakharchenko, the self-proclaimed boss of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, repeatedly stated his disdain for the ceasefire. "There is no ceasefire. We will fight. I promise," he said.

> "There will be no more ceasefires or rotations ... There will be no attempts to talk about ceasefire from our side. Kyiv does not understand that we are now able to attack on three fronts at once."

And then hours before the tragedy, he said: "Today the offensive against Mariupol begins. In a few days we will swallow the Debaltsevo kettle". Notably, a day before the deadly attacks, Russia's Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) anticipated Mariupol's "liberation" in an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour.

And yet, in spite of the obvious, Russia continues to blame Ukraine for ceasefire violations, including the Mariupol attack. Anti-Ukrainian rhetoric is not abating. Last week in this Chamber, we heard the long-debunked myths of "the junta", "the coup", "fascist Ukraine", and "oppression of Russian speakers" being once again resuscitated and put into use. For a year now, aggressive anti-Ukrainian propaganda has been used to brainwash, confuse, distract and obfuscate.

The international community should not and must not give in to these obfuscations. Therefore, let me ask again: How can a bunch of illegal militants expand their offensive, continue capturing territory and threaten to carry out attacks on three fronts against the State of Ukraine? How can a bunch of illegal militants without external trade ties, income or budget amass hundreds of armored combat vehicles, artillery systems and rocket launchers — all those Tochka-U tactical missile launch systems, Grad rockets, Uragan and Buratino rocket launchers? How can they afford modern tanks, each of which costs at least $4 million? How can they claim their own air fleet? How can hundreds of Russian soldiers be dying on Ukraine's soil if they are not even there?

How come hundreds of Russian mothers receive the dead bodies of their sons in Cargo 200 boxes from a conflict to which Russia claims it is not a party? How come, in spite of the devastating lawlessness and countless crimes committed by the separatist militants and registered in the reports of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Russia has not even once, not even mildly, condemned the perpetrators? All of this, as well as Russia's persistent protectiveness of the illegal militants, speak to Russia's direct involvement in and support for the war in Ukraine.

That involvement has been confirmed by certain militant leaders. Back in August last year, the same Alexander Zakharchenko said that thousands of Russian citizens, including many professional soldiers, were fighting alongside the separatists. And then he suddenly withdrew his statement, just as he retracted his boasting about the attack on Mariupol on Saturday. Another notorious character, the Russian commando Igor Girkin — who is also known as Strelkov and who played a big role in stoking war in eastern Ukraine — recently boasted to the press about having started the war by crossing the border with his squad, saying that if it had not been for them, there would have been no separatism in eastern Ukraine. A few days ago, he also said the Crimea referendum was carried out at gunpoint — something many of us have been repeating since the bogus plebiscite was held.

Life in eastern Ukraine may have been far from perfect due, to long years of neglect by successive Governments, yet the local inhabitants, many of them Russian speakers, had homes to return to after work, had their daily lives and had their daily bread. Thanks to the Kremlin's decision to "protect" Russian speakers, they now have no homes, no jobs and no income and may have lost dear ones or may be dead themselves. Russia's war, Russia's proxies and the abysmal lawlessness they imposed have brought destruction, displacement and death to the region.

In spite of all the ceasefire violations and military attacks, the Ukrainian leadership firmly maintains that the Minsk agreements are the only way forward towards peace. However, the Minsk agreements must be implemented by all the parties to the conflict — Russia included — in full and without arbitrary revisions or manipulation. The onus is on Russia to put an end to this senseless war by ending support to illegal armed groups, accepting international monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border, withdrawing its troops and weaponry from eastern Ukraine, ensuring the release by the illegal militants of all illegally detained persons, including Nadiya Savchenko — who is being held illegally on Russian territory — ending the manipulation of humanitarian assistance and reaffirming its respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. International observers, including the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitoring missions, must be provided full and unconditional access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea. Their reporting is indispensable to get the facts straight.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is seriously concerned about the escalation of the situation in Ukraine. Cities in south-east Ukraine have been subjected to indiscriminate shelling by heavy weaponry for countless days, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. We resolutely condemn such actions against the civilian population. Of course, we sympathize with all those who have suffered, regardless of which city or village the tragedy occurred.

Since the beginning of January, the armed forces of Ukraine have fired virtually non-stop on the largest city in Dombas — Donetsk. Just over the past week, at least 27 civilians have died and 71 people have been injured, and 105 residences and 3 hospitals, as well as 2 kindergartens and 3 schools, have also been destroyed. Overall, 2,367 residential buildings have been destroyed. There has also been intensive shelling against Horlivka — something that the Western media seem not to refer to. That is also something not raised here in the Chamber by either our Western colleagues or by the representatives of the Kyiv authorities. The last week was the most difficult for Horlivka since last summer: 107 people died, including 9 children. Three hundred and seventeen people have been injured. Hospitals, 15 schools and dozens of preschools have been damaged. On 21 January approximately 10 civilians died as a result of the shelling of the city of Stakhanov, Luhansk oblast, using Uragan multiple rocket launcher systems. On 21 January approximately 10 civilians died.

That is far from a comprehensive list of all the cities under the control of self-defence formations in which civilians are dying every day. Yet the news cycles over the past few days have focused on two incidents alone: the shelling of a bus in Volnovakha and that of a residential neighbourhood in Mariupol. It is quite clear why: both cities are controlled by Kyiv's forces. A similar tragedy in Donetsk in which a bus stop was shelled did not lead to mourning in Kyiv or to the convening of emergency meetings of the Security Council. It was not even worthy of a statement by the Secretary-General. Is it that in the areas and cities controlled by the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics we have second class citizens?

It is impossible not to look at the fact that Kyiv has used the tragedies of recent days to fan the flames of hysteria. Accusations against self-defence formations are voiced immediately after events occur — almost as if they have been prepared in advance. Calls immediately emanate from Kyiv to Western capitals for financial and military assistance and for exerting pressure on the Russian Federation. However, as soon as the propaganda value ends, interest falls away very quickly in using the situation further and continuing investigation — all the more so given that, once some time has passed, one finds that the facts sometimes fall quite short of what was said initially. That is why we call for objective investigation of the January tragedies in Volnovakha, Donetsk and Mariupol, as well as earlier tragedies, including in the Maidan, Odesa and Mariupol.

On Saturday, the members of the Security Council were not able to agree on a statement to the press with regard to the tragedy in Mariupol. The need to issue a statement was as evident to us as it was in the cases of Volnovakha and Donetsk, and we were ready to back a similar text. Why has it not been possible this time? The answer is simple: the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and Lithuania insisted on including in the text condemnation of one statement by the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, taken out of context of recent events and the entire crisis in Ukraine. That is something that has been pushed here at this meeting as well. But what is the full picture of what has taken place?

First, the leaders of the self-defence formations made different statements the day before yesterday. One cannot cite them selectively or take them out of context. Secondly, we have never heard anything from our Western colleagues in condemnation of the leaders of Ukraine, who have no shame when it comes to their statements and actions. There are threats that Dombas is going to be punched in the mouth, that it will be taken back by force and that it will be Ukrainized — and that the population has to prepare for "a major continental war", to which there is allegedly no alternative. Almost a week ago, no one other than Ukrainian President Poroshenko publicly declared the resumption of military activities. That took place just a few days after the meeting in Berlin of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France, at which they backed the idea of a speedy beginning to the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the line of contact as set out in the Minsk memorandum of 19 September 2014.

We should also remind our colleagues that Russian Security Council draft documents on very important

issues — putting an end to the blood-letting, the humanitarian situation in Dombas — were repeatedly unsuccessful. Take, for instance, a press statement in support of the Minsk agreements blocked by Lithuania and the United States of America, which was immediately submitted after they were made public, on 22 September. Following the shelling of a public transport stop in Donetsk, which was clearly carried out by Ukrainian forces, for a day we had to swat away unconstructive amendments by a number of delegations. It was by exerting pressure that we were able to agree to a text at the end of the day. In the case of Volnovakha, we agreed with the text that was proposed by the sponsors within one minute.

What is unfortunate is that throughout this entire conflict our Western colleagues have spent all their time accusing the self-defence formations of inhuman crimes, while they fully justify the actions of the Kyiv authorities. We have seen no constructive attempts to discuss the real reasons for the Ukrainian internal conflict and try to find a way out of the current situation. The escalation of the situation in Dombas was the result of the Kyiv authorities consistently rejecting direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk on the issue of the practical implementation of the Minsk agreements. During all of last September, we noticed the steps taken by the Kyiv forces to strengthen their military positions in the south-east. They deployed forces, equipment and heavy weaponry along the line of contact, as well as calling for new mobilizations and putting in new factory orders for defence equipment.

Measures for the economic reconstruction of Dombas were replaced by attempts to suppress the regions beyond their control. First they stopped paying pensions and social benefits, and then imposed a blockade on humanitarian assistance. All the while, Kyiv was preparing for war — something they did not hide in any way. History knows no "if". But everything could have been quite different if the Minsk ceasefire memorandum had been implemented in a timely manner, including the handing over of heavy weaponry and handing over the Donetsk airport to the self-defence formations. We would have avoided a new cycle of confrontation had the Ukrainian authorities accepted the 15 January proposal of Russian President Vladimir Putin on the immediate withdrawal of heavy weaponry. It is quite clear that peace in Dombas is something that is undesirable to the "war party" in Kyiv.

The Kyiv authorities have been sabotaging the holding of a regular meeting of the contact group in Minsk, unjustifiably conditioning it on high-level representation by the self-defence formations. The main thing now is to hold this meeting and not to quibble over the level of the participants. We are trying, as far as possible, to identify contacts for the meeting over the next few days. We will continue to prompt the parties towards direct dialogue, as we have done during the whole course of the internal Ukrainian crisis.

In that respect, we urge the representatives of States that possess some form of influence with Ukraine's leadership, especially Washington, D.C., to stop egging on the Ukrainian hawks, covering and justifying their inhumane actions, and pushing them towards a military solution to the conflict. That will only lead to an even greater catastrophe and create another hotbed of tension in Europe.

All responsible members of the international community must strive to attain from Kyiv not words but actions in the interest of launching a full-fledged political settlement process. Until the Kyiv party of war understands that force alone cannot resolve the conflict, and that multiple-launch rocket systems, tactical ballistic missiles, phosphorous and cluster munitions, and renewed mobilizations will not help it, such incidents will occur over and over again. The Kyiv authorities must be forced to sit down at negotiation table with the self-defence formations.

It is important that everyone understand that real results can be achieved only through direct dialogue between Kyiv and Donetsk and Luhansk, which the Ukrainian authorities have shirked thus far, having chosen a course of suppressing south-eastern Ukraine by military means. Without inclusive, direct political dialogue, which should allow us to properly negotiate the parameters for constitutional reform as required by the Geneva communiqué and the Minsk agreements, the national reconciliation of Ukraine and a sustainable settlement in the south-east will not occur.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing this afternoon.

This weekend, we saw the biggest single loss of civilian life in the Ukrainian crisis since the commitments made at Minsk on 5 September last year. Thirty civilians were killed and over 100 wounded following what the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) termed "an extremely

heavy barrage" of rockets fired indiscriminately into the crowded streets of Mariupol.

Only three days earlier, the Council had met to raise our serious concerns at the escalation in fighting along the agreed ceasefire line (see S/PV.7365). All of us called for de-escalation and a resumption of dialogue. That attack, many kilometres over the agreed ceasefire line, has taken the scope and threat of the conflict to a substantially new level. The attack was just not another refusal of the separatist leadership to abide by the commitments made at Minsk; it was a provocative and reckless escalation that, as the Secretary-General has made clear, could constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. Those responsible for the attack must be held accountable for their actions. It is deeply regrettable that the Council failed to agree on a press statement that would have condemned the announcement of a separatist offensive against Mariupol and the subsequent attack on Mariupol.

No one in the Council can deny the fact that the attack on Mariupol, like last week's on a bus near Volnovakha, came from the Russian-backed separatists. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission analysis of both attacks indicates clearly that in both incidents the rockets were fired from separatist-held territory. The attack would not have been possible without the military support of Russia and its supply of multiple-launch Grad and Uragan rocket systems to the separatists. In the past few weeks, Russia has transferred to the separatists hundreds of additional heavy weapo: s, not just rocket systems but also heavy artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles. Hundreds of Russian regular forces and special forces continue to operate on Ukrainian territory, in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These soldiers are backed by Russian command-and-control elements, air defence systems, drones and electronic warfare systems.

There is no doubt that the flow of heavy weapons across those borders, in violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, has given the separatists the fire power and the confidence to escalate the conflict. Since the Minsk agreement in September, which included an immediate ceasefire, the separatists have taken control of an additional 550 square kilometres of territory. Despite the commitments made at Minsk to securing continuous monitoring of the border with verification from the OSCE, hundreds of kilometres of border remain free for the flow of these deadly weapons, often under the guise of humanitarian convoys. Russia's persistent blocking of the proposed expansion of the OSCE border monitoring reveals its true intentions.

Russia arms the separatists, it finances them, it advises them, and it fights covertly alongside them. What it has not managed to do is to get its separatist proxies to stick to Russia's deceitful narrative. The self-proclaimed leader of the Donetsk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko, proudly announced on 24 January that "Today an offensive was launched on Mariupol. This will be the best possible monument to all of our dead". That statement, and others like it, cannot be glibly ignored, as the Russian representative encourages us to do. It is the reality. While Russia professes adherence to the Minsk agreement and the Normandy format meetings, and while it accuses the Ukrainian Government of provocations, the separatist forces that it supports are bent on undermining those agreements, attacking civilians and creating new realities on the ground. That approach, as we have seen in Mariupol this weekend, will only lead us closer to the precipice. It will lead to more deaths, more destruction and more people displaced from their homes.

On each occasion that the Council has met to discuss Ukraine, the vast majority of its members have underlined their commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. We assert quite rightly that these are fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They provide the foundation for an international system that is based on rules and respect and the preservation of international peace and security. We all defend these principles because we do not want a world where borders are redrawn by force, where States are threatened and destabilized by their neighbours, and where innocent civilian populations live in fear of battle orders issued in far-off capitals.

The Security Council has to make very clear where it stands against the profoundly dangerous path that Russia is pursuing in east Ukraine. That is why I urge all Council members to be clear in their messaging today. Russia must withdraw its equipment and troops. It must cease its support for the separatists, and it must effectively control its borders. It must use its influence over the separatists to stabilize the situation and prevent further dangerous escalation. It must play its full part in ensuring the immediate implementation of the Minsk protocol. Once again today, the representative of the Russian Federation has claimed that his country wants a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but such words

are worthless in themselves. We need to see Russian actions to put a stop to this widening and increasingly deadly conflict.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's urgent meeting. We are grateful for Under-Secretary-General Feltman's thorough briefing on such short notice.

Just five days ago (see S/PV.7365), we met in the Council and denounced the devastating consequences of attacks by Russian-backed separatists on civilians in eastern Ukraine, and we appealed to Russia to stop supporting, training and fighting alongside separatist forces. Members of the Council pressed Russia and the separatists not only to recommit themselves to the agreements they had made at Minsk, but actually to honour those commitments in their actions. Unfortunately, we are back in the Chamber today because Russia and the separatists have once again flouted those commitments. The targets are fresh ones, but Russia's end goal remains the same — to seize more territory and move the line of Russian-controlled territory deeper and deeper into Ukraine.

This time, however, statements by the separatists are complicating Russia's strategy. On Friday 23 January, the de facto leader of the Russian-backed separatists in Donetsk, Alexander Zakharchenko, said "today the offensive on Mariupol begins". He also said "there will be no more ceasefires". He said the separatists would not stop their attacks until they had "reached the borders of the former Donetsk region", bragging that separatist forces were now "able to attack in three directions simultaneously".

The representative of the Russian Federation today said that these are statements we have taken out of context. What context possibly justifies a massive offensive against a civilian-populated town? I would note also that attacking in three directions, as the separatist leader said his forces had the capability to do, takes a lot of weapons and forces. This capability reflects the difference made by the substantial months-long influx of Russian personnel and heavy weapons. We know that Zakharchenko said these things because he was filmed when he said them and quoted by the official Russian news agency, Tass. On Saturday, Zakharchenko told people at a rally in Donetsk "today the attack on Mariupol began". He added that "in a few days we will encircle Debaltsevo", a city that is 12 kilometres outside the ceasefire line established at Minsk.

If only the separatists' words had been empty bravado. Unfortunately, on Saturday the world witnessed the horrors that resulted from the separatist attack on Mariupol, a city 25 kilometres outside of the Minsk line. On Saturday alone, more than 100 people were injured in rocket attacks on the city. Approximately 30 people were killed, including women, elderly and children, one of whom was a four-year old boy. Some 40 rounds of rockets struck the city, hitting a market, homes and a school, among other civilian structures. The impartial Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine examined blast craters and concluded that they had been caused by Grad rockets fired from multi-rocket launcher systems in separatist-controlled areas.

Why do these locations matter to the Russians and the separatists? Mariupol is a port city that would provide Russia with another means of supplying separatists. And controlling the city would be another step toward creating a land-bridge to illegally occupied Crimea. Debaltsevo is a strategic rail and road hub and serves as a key link between the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. It is no accident that these strategic cities are in Russia's sights. When on Saturday members of the Council tried to issue a joint statement denouncing the civilian casualties and expressing concern about the separatist statements, Russia blocked it, as we have heard — no wonder, given that less than a day earlier Russia had been perfectly content to disseminate Zakharchenko's statements in its State-run media. It would be strange to be concerned about statements one had encouraged and publicized, but when your State news agency circulates announcements relishing a new offensive and your diplomats refuse to express concern about them, you own not only the statements but also the offensives.

Now sometimes, perhaps given the fog of this bloody war, the separatists are too explicit about their objectives. Indeed, after initially blasting around the separatists' Mariupol ambitions in the news service, Russia began to see the same ghastly images and reports of the carnage that the rest of us saw. At that point, perhaps knowing the source of the weaponry used, Russia tried to deny any tie between the separatists and the attacks. The Russian news service Tass even tried to erase from official news stories all quotes from Zakharchenko speaking about the separatists' attacks.

It is not hard to understand why Russia does not want the world to hear separatist statements. Last Wednesday,

the representative of the Russian Federation told the Council that "the Russian Federation is ensuring full compliance with the Minsk accords" (*S/PV.7365, p. 7*). On Saturday, however, Zakharchenko openly admitted that his forces were violating those same accords. He appeared not to have gotten the Russian memo, which clearly calls for violating the accords while pretending you are not. Despite Zakharchenko's statements, Russia continues to try to play the international community for the fool and blame the violence on the Ukrainians. As recently as yesterday, Foreign Minister Lavrov said "the worsening situation in Ukraine was the result of constant attacks conducted by the Ukrainian Government troops, which breached the Minsk agreements". We heard the same here today from the representative of the Russian Federation.

Zakharchenko's statements are a problem for Russia because they are too straightforward. As members of the Council know — and as, increasingly, all the world can see — the separatists he claims to lead are trained and equipped by Russia and fight with Russian forces by their side. So when Zakharchenko brags about seizing territory beyond the Minsk ceasefire line; when he announces at rallies that separatists will strike Ukrainian forces without provocation; and when he says that he is not interested in negotiating, he is not only speaking about the separatists' intentions but also about Russia's intentions. This offensive is made in Moscow. It is waged by Russian-trained and Russian-funded separatists who use Russian missiles and Russian tanks, who are backed up by Russian troops, and whose operations receive direct Russian assistance.

Since December, Russia has transferred hundreds of pieces of military equipment to pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, including tanks, armored vehicles, rocket systems, heavy artillery and other military equipment. And in recent weeks, Russia has resupplied the separatists with hundreds of pieces of advanced weaponry, including additional rocket systems, heavy artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles. In mid to late January, notwithstanding the shootdown of flight MH-17, Russia even deployed into eastern Ukraine advanced surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft systems, marking the highest level of Russian air-defence presence in Eastern Ukraine since September 2014. There is a direct correlation between the movement of heavy weapons and the surge in that movement across the border, and attempts by separatists to take more ground.

The horror wrought by this arsenal has been deadly. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the period from 13 to 21 January was the deadliest on record since the 5 September agreement was signed in Minsk. During this time, an average of 29 people were killed each day. More than 5,000 people have been killed and almost 11,000 maimed since the conflict began in April 2014. And today, this very day, the attacks continue on the civilian-populated areas over the Minsk ceasefire lines, not only in Mariupol and Debaltsevo, but also in Pisky and Stanichno-Luhansk. To the Russians, Mariupol and Debaltsevo may just be strategic chess pieces in their effort to move the line of territory that they control, but these cities are also home to hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian civilians. Nearly 500,000 people live in Mariupol, the second biggest city in the Donetsk region, and more than 25,000 live in Debaltsevo. Mariupol is home to 92 preschools attended by 13,000 children.

We continue to believe that the only solution to this situation is a political solution, not a military solution. To that end, we continue to support the efforts of the trilateral contact group, as well as the Normandy group of foreign ministers. We welcome the Normandy group's agreement in Berlin, which recognizes the need for the full, immediate implementation of the Minsk agreement.

If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not condemn the statements by separatists that they will attack Ukrainians first and accept no more ceasefires, instead of trying to erase those statements from its State-run news services? If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not pull its tanks and Grad missiles out of eastern Ukraine instead of sending in more? If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not withdraw its forces at least to the lines agreed upon at Minsk, rather than send in a huge infusion of Russian heavy weapons so as to carve out new lines? Only if Russia takes these steps will there be a chance for the political solution that is so desperately needed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing. We would have all wished to see 2015 begin under better auspices for Ukraine and its stability. The year has barely started, and twice in less than a week the situation on the ground has forced us to meet here.

The spiral of chaos, which started two weeks ago after several months of relative calm, could not be halted

these past few days — quite the contrary. The deaths of 13 civilians in Volnovakha on 13 January, as well as the shelling of a trolleybus in Donetsk last week, which claimed at least eight civilian victims, were already a source of concern, even as the previous day the Russian, Ukrainian, French and German Foreign Ministers had been able to reach an agreement on the withdrawal of heavy weaponry.

On Saturday and Sunday in Mariupol, separatist groups attacked residential neighbourhoods with rockets, killing nearly 30 civilians and instilling terror among the population. All reports from the ground, in particular those of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observers, confirm this. More than a further violation of the ceasefire, this is also a serious violation of the international humanitarian law that protects civilians. These acts are unacceptable as they indiscriminately target civilians. The offensive against Mariupol, which was provocatively welcomed by Alexander Zakharchenko last Saturday, violated the commitments undertaken by the parties last September in Minsk and is entirely unacceptable.

Let us not mince words. By supporting the Ukrainian separatists and their actions, Russia bears a significant share of responsibility for the violence. We must now turn to dialogue and seriously discuss the future of Ukraine and how to restore peace. We also call on Russia to stop supporting the separatists, who are hell-bent on destabilizing the situation. We call for a long-overdue end to the transfer of weapons and manpower across the Russian-Ukrainian border, which is fuelling the war and violates the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and which undermines diplomatic efforts seeking to settle the conflict in accordance with international law and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Ukrainians, including its minorities. We urge Russia to use all its influence on the separatists in the east of the country so that they fully respect the ceasefire.

The statements made by Mr. Lavrov today, announcing the facilitation of contacts between the warring parties, are a positive sign but they are not enough. We also call on Ukraine to begin the institutional reform as per its commitments. President Poroshenko has spoken publicly of the prospects for national dialogue and institutional reform. That statement was a further step towards the comprehensive implementation of the Minsk accords, which are the only way to achieve a negotiated solution to this crisis. The international community will judge the good faith of the parties not on mere statements but on concrete and verifiable actions that prove their genuine commitment to de-escalation.

We must also call on all parties to refrain from attacking the civilian population, to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure humanitarian access to the wounded and to civilians in need of assistance. We must underscore that there can be no military solution to this conflict. Only by all parties fully implementing the Minsk accords and resuming serious diplomatic discussions, in the context of the trilateral contact group, can there be a positive outcome to this crisis. Every efforts must be made to that end.

In this difficult context, we cannot afford to let down our guard. France remains and will remain fully mobilized to achieving a peaceful settlement. Our goals are clear and consistent: respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry on each side of the contact line, a resumption of prisoner exchanges, the resolution of humanitarian issues and the implementation by the parties of all measures under the Minsk accords.

France will pursue its efforts, in close contact with our German partners and the Russian and Ukrainian authorities, under the so-called Normandy format. We have no time to waste. This is not the time for prevarication or hypocrisy. Today we must urgently end this conflict, which has already claimed more than 5,000 lives and exacted too high a price from Ukraine, from Russia, from the European Union and from the international system as a whole.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Ukraine has a democratic Constitution and is implementing a process of reform. Ukraine made a decisive contribution to nuclear non-proliferation when it decided in 1994 to renounce nuclear weapons. Ukraine is a crucial player in the international order. We unreservedly support its territorial integrity. Given these facts, there should be no violence in Ukraine. However, today we are meeting once again due to an extremely serious deterioration in the situation.

Spain would have liked the Council to adopt a statement. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I

therefore vigorously and unreservedly condemn the bombing of urban areas in the city of Mariupol, which claimed tens of civilian victims and injured more than 100. I express the condolences of my country and my delegation to the families of the victims and to the people and Government of Ukraine. They can count on Spain's solidarity.

According to the information provided yesterday by the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as related by Mr. Feltman, the rockets were launched from locations under the control of rebel groups of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. The command responsibility for these attacks must be investigated and the perpetrators held responsible and brought to justice. Like other delegations, we deplore the statement made by Alexander Zakharchenko shortly before the attack on Mariupol. The statements constitute a clear violation of the ceasefire and of the Minsk accords. The attacks against civilians are a flagrant violation of international law. International law puts obligations not only on the parties but also on those within whose capacity it is to act to prevent any further violation of international law.

Furthermore, the High Commissioner for Human Rights warned on Friday of the continued presence of foreign fighters in eastern Ukraine. According to reports, in keeping with that of the High Commissioner, they are troops of the Russian Federation. The same source confirmed the presence of sophisticated heavy weaponry in populated areas, under the control of armed rebel groups, and reported repeated violations of the human rights of the civilians trapped there and a lack of the rule of law in those areas.

The Security Council cannot remain silent. It must make itself heard clearly given this situation. We call once again for the full implementation of the Minsk memorandum and protocol, and for the immediate restoration of the ceasefire. We appeal to all those in a position to influence those responsible for their horrendous acts, in particular to Russia, to, in accordance with its status as a signatory to the Minsk accords and to the joint Berlin declaration of 21 January, as well as a member of the OSCE trilateral contact group, and in exercise of its responsibility of the Security Council, contribute to de-escalate the tensions and compel the rebel groups to renounce violence and accept the peaceful and lawful path to pursue their claims.

The violence and horrific acts of this weekend sought to derail dialogue and undermine the negotiated settlement of the crisis provided for in the Minsk accords. We must not allow this to happen.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to sincerely thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his informative briefing.

Jordan regrets certain parties' disregard of the several calls made for a ceasefire either by the Security Council or the international community as a whole. We also regret the continued escalation of the crisis and the violation of the Minsk peace agreement. Jordan expresses its deep concern at this serious escalation of violence and fighting, which could have grave consequences and lead to the further deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine and the region.

Jordan strongly condemns the targeting and intimidation of civilians as well as the shelling of residential areas, regardless of the source, and calls for the conduct of a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident involving the shelling of a bus stop in Donetsk and the appalling incident that took place in Mariupol two years ago, which is considered to be the bloodiest incident since last July's peace agreement. We also call for the bringing to justice of all of the perpetrators of these criminals acts.

This serious setback in the situation in eastern Ukraine and the spread of the fighting to other cities makes it incumbent on all parties to hold an emergency meeting to continue the negotiations based on previous agreements and with a view to speedily reaching a comprehensive ceasefire. A political and peaceful solution will not be possible in the context of resort to military means or unilateral measures that undermine regional and international efforts and bring the negotiations back to square one. Rather, the solution lies in the effective measures that lead to peace and calm.

Jordan calls on all States with influence on the separatists to urge them to refrain from the use of force and to cease all violations, which can lead only to further instability in Ukraine.

We call once again on all parties involved in this conflict to shoulder their responsibilities, to immediately implement a ceasefire and to stop all escalatory measures, including provocative and irresponsible speech by any party. We in the Council

and at the international level as a whole should redouble our efforts and do our utmost to prevent the collapse of all the progress that has been achieved over the past year, so as to achieve a comprehensive agreement that takes into account all of the interests of the different parties.

We would conclude by stressing the importance of preserving the country's unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty, of non-interference in its internal affairs, of the proper control of its borders and of the cessation of flows of separatists and foreign fighters and weapons into Ukrainian territory. We also stress the importance of the full implementation, in letter and in spirit, of the Minsk peace agreement and of the memorandum issued later, as well as of the joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine on the establishment of a communication line.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

In recent days, we have witnessed a drastic deterioration in the situation in eastern Ukraine, with frequent clashes and attacks that have caused heavy casualties among civilians, including women and children. China condemns all violent attacks aimed at civilians and expresses its condolences to the victims and its sympathy to their families.

We support the conduct of an objective investigation of the relevant attacks to determine the truth and bring the perpetrators to justice. Last week, the Security Council held a public meeting on the question of Ukraine (see S/PV.7365). The relevant Member States called on the parties to the conflict to take effective measures to as to avoid any escalation of the conflict or confrontation. However, much to our distress, the situation in eastern Ukraine has not improved but, on the contrary, escalated, resulting in a considerable loss of civilian life and property. China is deeply concerned at the recent developments in the situation.

The deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine is not in the interest of any party. What is most urgent now is for all parties to be calm and exercise restraint so as to avoid any further escalation of the conflict or confrontation, to bring about a ceasefire and stop the violence in eastern Ukraine and to implement comprehensively the Minsk agreement reached in September. All of the parties concerned must make effective efforts to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Current developments in the situation clearly demonstrate that in dealing with the situation in Ukraine, it is necessary to abide by the overall objective of seeking a political settlement; to fully consider the complex historical factors and the reality of the issue relating to Ukraine; to take into full account the legitimate rights, interests and demands of all regions and ethnic communities in Ukraine; and to attach great importance to addressing the legitimate concerns of all parties and ensure that the interests of all sides are accommodated in a balanced manner, so as to arrive at a fundamental and enduring solution to the question of Ukraine.

The international community must make greater diplomatic efforts to promote the quest for a political settlement of the issue. Discussions held by the Security Council must play a constructive role in helping to ease the situation in Ukraine. China has consistently held that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected. Chinas has adopted an objective and fair position concerning the question of Ukraine. We support the relevant parties of the international community in their efforts to seek a political settlement of the question of Ukraine.

China calls on all parties to make greater efforts and to bring into full play the role of the Normandy and Minsk mediation mechanisms. We hope that through an inclusive political dialogue, and on the basis of accommodating the legitimate interests and concerns of all parties, it will be possible soon to reach a comprehensive balanced and lasting political settlement to achieve peace, security stability and development in Ukraine and the region as a whole. China will continue to play an active and constructive role in the quest for a political settlement of the question of Ukraine.

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

Chad is deeply concerned at the deterioration of the security situation in Ukraine, especially in the region of Donetsk and Luhansk. Despite the untiring calls made by the international community for restraint and calm, a violent attack on the port of Mariupol in the Donetsk region took place on Saturday, 24 January, resulting in at least 30 civilians killed and more than 100 injured. On 13 January, we saw the shelling of a bus near Volnovakha that claimed the lives of 12 civilians, the majority of whom were women.

The situation is a serious one. Given the lack of political will when it comes to putting an end to the violence, and the significant increase in the number of civilian victims, Chad is fearful of a resumption of the fighting, whose primary victims will, as always, be civilians.

Developments in terms of the violence in Ukraine very often lead to violations of international humanitarian law, and the international community cannot remain impassively on the sidelines. Those who are responsible must be brought to justice.

With more than 5,000 deaths, 10,300 injured and more than 1 million displaced persons, the Ukrainian tragedy has gone on long enough. In that regard, Chad calls on all the parties to remain calm and show restraint and urges the Government and separatists to engage in a direct and inclusive national dialogue with a view to national reconciliation. Moreover, Chad believes that the solution to the Ukrainian crisis is political, and that it will largely depend upon the willingness of the parties concerned to commit to a true negotiations process to achieve lasting peace. Chad encourages the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to pursue its investigations with a view to assigning responsibility for the Ukrainian crisis, which has lasted far too long and caused many victims.

In line with the Normandy format and Milan meetings and the mediation provided by the trilateral contact group, Chad urges on the countries involved and the Secretary-General, through his good offices, to relaunch the peace process in Ukraine.

To conclude, we urge friendly countries with influence on the parties to bring the necessary pressure to bear with a view to achieving a lasting solution to the crisis on the basis of the Minsk agreements and declaration, with full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Since the Council's meeting last week on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7365), the conflict in the country has intensified, and civilians continue to suffer the consequences. The rocket attacks on Mariupol, which left 30 people dead and more than 100 injured, including women and children, serve to illustrate this point. Nigeria condemns in the strongest terms indiscriminate attacks on residential areas. They serve no military purpose, they violate international law and they are unacceptable.

We call on both sides to immediately de-escalate the fighting and respect the terms of the ceasefire agreement reached at the Minsk peace talks. We stress that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The parties should seek a political solution through dialogue. It is important that the concerns of the separatists be addressed within the framework of a negotiated political settlement. That should be done without compromising the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this Security Council briefing on Ukraine. We also welcome Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and we appreciate the information he has provided to us on the political situation in Ukraine.

Our country expresses its grave concern about the recent escalation of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has caused loss of civilian lives and untold numbers of injuries. Venezuela reiterates its call on the parties to promote a peaceful, negotiated, political solution to the crisis. We stress that any violent incident on the ground should be investigated independently, and that the investigation's conclusions should be based on irrefutable evidence. Venezuela rejects any act of violence or terrorism, in particular attacks against civilians, from wherever they originate.

The intensification of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine makes it imperative that the parties put an end to their hostilities in the area. The ceasefire is therefore a crucial step.

It is necessary to continue on the path of seeking a political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis, in which the conflicting parties commit to working on achieving a firm and lasting peace.

The mediation efforts by regional organizations is, in our view, particularly important in the process of finding a negotiated settlement to the conflict. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Germany and France to promote dialogue among Ukraine, Russia and the representatives of the Donbas region.

We also welcome the joint communiqué issued on 21 January in Berlin by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine, and we encourage the parties to work together for its implementation.

The Minsk agreements are the basis on which lasting peace can be achieved in the region. We reiterate that any intervention by outside elements that violate the Minsk agreements and regional efforts to reach an agreement between the parties should be avoided.

Venezuela stresses that the parties must act with a sense of restraint in order to prevent the dialogue from being undermined by unilateral actions that jeopardize the peace process. The cycle of violence must be broken. Building the foundation for peace involves putting an end to hate speech, ethnic persecution and war propaganda. The historic and root causes of the conflict must be addressed and a political agreement between the parties must be sought.

The escalation in hostilities requires strict compliance by the belligerent parties with obligations concerning the protection of civilians in the areas affected by violence, including the need to ensure humanitarian access to internally displaced persons, refugees and others residents in areas affected by the conflict.

Finally, we again call on all parties to redouble their efforts in the search for a just and lasting political solution, which is in their own interests and those of the entire region.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate, and all the more so because of the failure of the Security Council over the weekend to agree to a simple and clear press statement that would have condemned the events in Mariupol. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing, which has been very helpful to the Council.

New Zealand condemns the killing of approximately 30 people and the injuring of more than 90 civilians on 24 January in Mariupol. The reports of indiscriminate shelling of civilian populations and residential areas are deeply concerning, as indeed are the other incidents that were outlined by Under-Secretary-General Feltman. We voiced our concerns last week that the violence was escalating at an alarming rate. The Mariupol incident confirms that the situation in eastern Ukraine is now on a disastrous downward spiral. We do not take this incident in isolation. Its occurrence, magnitude and the claims made about it by the separatist leadership speak for themselves. It was a major assault on a civilian population with the sole purpose of taking and controlling the area as a result.

The most recent civilian casualties from the conflict in eastern Ukraine are completely unacceptable. We call on all sides to respect international humanitarian law and to refrain from any indiscriminate attacks. In that regard, we note that rockets have been launched indiscriminately into civilian areas — a violation of international humanitarian law. There can be no impunity for such reckless acts. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.

Russia's provision of troops and materiel to the separatists is irresponsible. The threat of "a major Ukrainian war" is both chilling and wholly inappropriate, and it may now be close to a reality.

Against the mounting body of evidence, Russia is unapologetic for the role it is playing in supporting the separatists. Russia speaks about the facts. What we know for a fact is that Russia is playing a role in this conflict.

We support the promotion of a fully inclusive political dialogue. We call on Russia, instead of blaming others, to use the diplomatic and other tools it has available to ensure that the separatists respect a ceasefire. That ceasefire, as already agreed on in the Minsk accords, must be implemented immediately. The Council must also live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. We must put politics aside, difficult although that may be, and use our collective influence to stop the killing of civilians in eastern Ukraine. That must be the priority. Although this is perhaps not for today's meeting, in future we would like to see the Council seriously consider how it can put pressure on all the belligerents to implement the ceasefire. Words may no longer be enough; more action may still be required.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Feltman for briefing us at such short notice.

Malaysia is alarmed at the escalating violence in eastern Ukraine since the last Security Council meeting on the subject (see S/PV.7365), less than a week ago. Since then we have seen a repeat of indiscriminate attacks on civilians. On 22 January a public transport stop in the city of Donetsk was shelled, with as many

as 15 people killed and more than 20 civilians injured. Two days later, at least 30 people, including two children, were killed in the city of Mariupol, and more than 100 civilians injured. Malaysia condemns such indiscriminate attacks in the strongest terms. It is most unfortunate that the latest violence in Mariupol did not even merit the Security Council's condemnation, owing to a lack of consensus among Council members on the draft press statement. Malaysia calls for an independent investigation into the incidents. The perpetrators of such heinous crimes against civilians must be held accountable. We would like to remind the parties to the conflict that they should adhere to international human-rights and humanitarian law. Attacks on humanitarian convoys must also cease immediately.

The recent events have seriously undermined the ceasefire agreement reached in September of last year between the conflicting parties. Malaysia strongly urges the relevant parties to comply with their commitments as outlined in the Minsk protocol of 5 September and the memorandum of 9 September. The latest developments in eastern Ukraine prove that a diplomatic and political solution is more urgent than ever. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes all efforts that could facilitate a de-escalation of the crisis and contribute to ending the conflict, including the possibility of resuming Geneva-format negotiations. As Malaysia stated last week (see S/PV.7365), a military solution would be in no one's interests in the long run and would not be suitable.

Seventy years after the establishment of the United Nations, we still see blatant disregard today for the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly respect for countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. Malaysia urges the relevant parties to reflect on the consequences of such actions for their long-term interests and international standing. We reiterate our call to the relevant parties to explore all possible avenues for finding a peaceful solution. We are committed to playing a constructive role in the Council in order to de-escalate the crisis and see talks resume so as to restore Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): I am grateful to you for convening this meeting, Mr. President, and would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing on the outbreak of hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

In our meeting on Wednesday, 21 January (see S/PV. 7365), the Angolan delegation expressed its position on the issue in the wake of the attack on a bus in the Donetsk region that resulted in a number of civilian casualties. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our position, while condemning the recent attack on Mariupol and the loss of life and extensive destruction of property. I will be brief.

We regret the loss of lives in the recent outbreak of hostilities in eastern Ukraine and emphasize the urgent need to protect civilians. We condemn the violations of the ceasefire and urge all the parties to observe it. We believe that the Minsk accords constitute a framework for a peaceful solution to the conflict, and we urge all parties to abide by them. We stress the importance of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Finally, we believe it is crucial that humanitarian assistance be provided to the victims of the conflict and that efforts stepped up to help the thousands in need.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chile.

We would like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing on the recent events in Ukraine.

We join in the condemnation of the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in the city of Mariupol, an attack that constitutes a significant and worrying escalation of the level of violence in eastern Ukraine. Those responsible for such deplorable acts against the civilian population must be held accountable, and we emphasize the absolute necessity for an objective investigation of the facts that will see that those responsible are brought to justice.

The violence must end so that Ukrainians can rebuild their lives in a stable and secure country, while maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We urge the parties to fully implement the Minsk agreements, which, along with the ceasefire memorandum of 19 September, have laid the foundations and established the criteria for a negotiated solution to the crisis.

We furthermore recall that in Minsk all parties agreed to allow the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor and verify the ceasefire. We emphasize our support for the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and urge the parties to cooperate with its mandate, particularly through support for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): Thank you for convening today's urgent meeting, Mr. President. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing, and all those here whose statements supported Ukraine and expressed sympathy with my people.

Unfortunately, since the previous Security Council meeting on Ukraine on 21 January, (see S/PV.7365) the situation there has deteriorated significantly. On 24 January, Russian-backed terrorists committed another heinous crime against humanity. As a result of the shelling of residential areas in Mariupol, in eastern Ukraine, 30 civilians were killed and more than 100 wounded. According to the 24 January spot report of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the bombardment was carried out using multiple Grad and Uragan rockets launched from inside terrorist-controlled territory. The shelling of Mariupol began just after statements by one of the terrorist leaders about imminent attacks on Ukrainian cities, as well as a significant increase in inflows of Russian armed forces and weapons into the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As the President of Ukraine stated,

> "The bloody murder of dozens of civilians and injuries to almost 100 people by pro-Russian terrorists in Mariupol not only constitute a terrorist attack, they are a crime against humanity, and thus an issue to be considered by the tribunal in The Hague".

Yesterday was yet another day of mourning in Ukraine. We express our gratitude to the whole civilized world for its strong solidarity with Ukraine in the wake of this horrible tragedy, for the deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and for the wishes for a swift recovery of those injured. Ukraine appreciates the Secretary-General's clear and unambiguous statement denouncing the unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire by the so-called rebel leadership.

In that respect, it is highly regretful that one of the permanent members of the Security Council, bestowed by the Charter of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has once again showed its utter disrespect, not only of the Charter but of human values, by blocking the Council's condemnation of the heinous crimes against humanity committed by terrorists in Mariupol.

Today's statement delivered by the Russian delegation made it sound as if it were not Russia that invaded, occupied and annexed a part of the Ukrainian sovereign territory of Crimea last spring. The Russian delegation's statement today made it sound as if regular Russian troops were not in Ukrainian sovereign territory. At the last meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.7365), I demanded an explanation as to what 16 Russian battalions and a huge number of tanks and artillery were doing in my country without an invitation. The civilized world is waiting for an explanation from the Russian side. On can find additional evidence on my Mission's website, which we will try to send to Council members as well.

If militants and Russia had complied with the Minsk agreements, this tragedy — the most dreadful since the beginning of the Russian aggression — would not have happened. Radio and telephone conversations intercepted by the Security Service of Ukraine irrefutably indicate that the attack was organized by terrorists supported by Russia. Further evidence of that is Russia's blocking of a draft statement by the Security Council condemning this horrible event, as well as its complete silence — not a single word of reproach — about the terrorists' other barbaric acts in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, such as the attack on Volnovakha, the shameful behaviour with regard to Ukrainian hostages, the tragedy at the trolleybus stop in Donetsk and many other cases. Therefore, the Russian Federation, which continues to support terrorist activities and whose troops are directly involved in hostilities against Ukraine, is solely responsible for the murders in recent weeks of innocent civilians in Volnovakha, Debaltsevo, Donetsk, Mariupol and many other towns and villages in Ukraine.

We seek international support so that Russia is finally compelled to keep its promises, rein in its proxies and stop sending troops and weaponry into Ukraine. We demand that Russia fully implement the Minsk agreements, which it has thus far supported in words only, including the immediate withdrawal of all its armed forces from the territory of Ukraine, the stabilization of the Ukrainian-Russian border and the establishment of international monitoring. It should also free without any further delay Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko — who is still on a hunger strike

that is endangering her life — as well as Oleg Sentsov, Alexander Kolchenko and the other Ukrainian citizens who are being held in Russia illegally.

We call on the international community to respond resolutely to the crimes of terrorists and to increase all forms of pressure on those who sponsor and support them. Our position remains constant: the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic must be recognized as terrorist organizations.

Time and again, we have called on the Security Council to finally exercise its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations so as to prevent these terrorist groups from committing their crimes. The only way to do that is to put an end to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Today, as never before, we need joint decisive actions by the international community against terrorist organizations and those who control them.

Let me summarize my statement with the words of our President:

> "We stand for peace, but we accept the enemy's challenge. We will defend our homeland as true patriots. We will do everything to stop the pain and suffering, to return peace to each Ukrainian family — from Lviv to Luhansk, from Chernihiv to Kerch. Having united our efforts, we will defend our freedom."

In this struggle for Ukraine, for Europe and, ultimately, for the Charter of the United Nations, we count on the Council's solidarity and actions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make a number of substantive comments. However, by way of introduction, I would like to again revisit the topic of what took place in Mariupol and the fact that the Security Council was not in a position to condemn or speak to that tragedy.

A number of my colleagues have referred to this, including my Ukrainian colleague. Even when compared to his usual standards, he has really misstated the position of the Russian Federation. First, we always condemn all attacks on all civilians, and we mourn the deaths of all civilians. This is quite different from the authorities in Kyiv, who say they mourn the deaths of civilians but clearly indicate which civilians and from which regions. The fact that hundreds of individuals are dying from Ukrainian rockets and snipers does not interest them. They continue to view Donbas as Ukrainian territory. If one does not consider it to be Ukrainian territory anymore, one should just say so clearly. That would simplify things.

Secondly, we always condemn the deaths of innocent people, and we stood ready to do so in the case of Mariupol as well. The fact that we were not able to do so was the result of the sloppy diplomacy conducted by a number of our colleagues using methods they have resorted to in the past with respect to the Ukrainian crisis, when they have come up with wording that is quite clearly unacceptable to one member of the Security Council. Have they ever condemned the inhumane statements that we hear from the authorities in Kyiv? Not once. Why is it that they all fixate on the statements of one leader of the self-defence formations and insist that we have to condemn them? It is quite clear that we are not acting fairly here, because a statement condemning what happened in Mariupol would have been adopted in just a few minutes, just as we adopted a statement condemning what took place in Volnovakha, which we immediately agreed to.

Thirdly, we have always been in favour of objective investigations in such cases. Of course, one does not want to bring to the Security Council the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission. In this case, however, it seems to us that the members of the Monitoring Mission did not act appropriately. The members of the Mission, which included individuals from the United States, took a look the site of the tragedy in a very cursory way and then immediately came up with a statement. That runs counter to the traditional and agreed methods of work of the OSCE. Again, in this situation we see a case in which tragic events have clearly been exploited for political ends.

Allow me to now move on to the more substantive part of our discussion. Regrettably, our meeting here today reminds us of a great many previous meetings, although the focus is perhaps a little different than before. Many colleagues today have focused on the statements made by the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. I remind Council members that Donbas has been shelled for months by Ukrainian rockets and artillery. Therefore, it is quite clear that we cannot expect conciliatory statements from the leaders of the Donetsk People's Republic. They have been trying for month to push the rockets and artillery of the

Ukrainian forces back far enough so that they could not threaten Donetsk and Luhansk. That, too, is a goal of the Minsk agreements and underscores the importance of implementing them.

We have received much information here today, but we need to look at the roots of the problem. We need to understand what is meant by the thesis that the conflict in eastern Ukraine cannot be resolved by military means. We referred to this in the Security Council during the early phase of the conflict. Ukrainian tanks cannot simply move into Donbas. Unfortunately, that was part of the Poroshenko peace plan, which, in essence, demanded the capitulation of the self-defence formations. That was the first step towards escalating the conflict into a catastrophe. That is unacceptable, but unfortunately we have recently seen it being pushed by certain members of the Security Council. Some Council members today have said that the insurgents and Russia need to do this, that and the other, and then we could begin the political settlement. That is the entirely wrong approach. Serious political efforts need to be undertaken right now. Direct dialogue between Kyiv and the east need to be set up. It is necessary to put an end to the game of hide-and-seek with the Constitution, which needs to be discussed at a all-Ukraine level.

Today, Mr. Feltman said that Mr. Poroshenko had agreed to a return to the Geneva format. Frankly, I am not familiar with the fact that Russia had agreed to a change in the format, but as far as I know Moscow is very flexible when it comes to the format. We stand ready to work in any format that would have a chance of yielding genuine progress in favour of a settlement. I wish to underscore, however, no discussion regarding one format or another should serve as a pretext to move away from direct dialogue between Kyiv and the representatives of the regions, first and foremost the east.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Ukraine has requested the floor for a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): My country has been mentioned once again. Ukraine has always presented facts and figures, confirmed not only by other national competent authorities, but also by many independent observers and missions of international organizations on the ground. Today, we also have a list of questions on the 16 battalions and other groups. I urge the Council to compare the figures. At the last Council meeting (see S/PV.7365), 9,000 Russian troops were mentioned. Today, we have calculated that there are around 12,000 troops, 235 tanks, 720 armoured combat vehicles and 263 artillery systems. It would be much easier for us if we received any explanation from the Russian side about what they are doing in the sovereign territory of Ukraine. It would be much easier for all of us to solve the problem if they immediately withdrew those forces and their presence in Ukraine, pursuant to the Minsk agreement.

What we have heard instead from the Russian representative in the Council today is nothing but the old, arid and constantly repeated magic mantra — fictions about coup d'etats, Bandera and Shukhevych fascists, anti-Semites, oppression of the Russian language, ignoring the rights of the Donbas population, and so on. But not even once have Ukraine and the world received even a brief and meaningful message of condolence from Russia for the victims killed by its own mercenaries in Mariupol or Volnovakha. Instead, we see how Russia helps the Russian-speaking population of Donbas: by exterminating it with Grad shelling.

I call again on the Russian Federation not to play with words or to turn Council deliberations into theatre. We have a lot of proof of its direct and indirect aggression in Ukraine. We are still restrained in calling for the Council's full recognition that Russia is the aggressor, but that cannot last long. Russia is a sponsor of terrorism in Ukraine. We advise Russia to stop and to do what was agreed in Minsk.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am a little surprised at our Ukrainian colleague has begun to argue using concepts that I did not voice during my comments in the Council today. But it is good that he he has remembered them and that he deems it necessary to continue to argue about things that are simply not subject to argument, concerning Stepan Bandera and other related matters.

I am, however, puzzled by something else. I am gratified by the fact that our Ukrainian colleague has assimilated the English language and that he speaks it so well, but I am just stunned by the fact that he has forgotten his Russian, because only a few moments ago I explained the thrust of the problem facing the east. Instead of simply accepting that and building a political

position based on it, we hear the same old propaganda. That is quite regrettable.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7369

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7369th meeting

Wednesday, 28 January 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/48, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

I now give the floor to Ms. Kang.

Ms. Kang: On behalf of Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Emergency Relief Coordinator, I have the honour to deliver the following statement.

Syria is entering its fifth year of conflict characterized by extreme violence and brutality. Resolution 2139 (2014) called for an end to the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment and the use of barrel bombs, But the call continues to be ignored. The Government has continued to conduct airstrikes, including barrel bombs, in densely populated areas. Between 21 and 26 January, Government airstrikes on East Ghouta in Rural Damascus reportedly killed nearly 100 people and injured scores more. Armed opposition groups and designated terrorist organizations have also continued to use explosive weapons in populated areas. A barrage of around 50 rockets and mortars killed at least seven and injured 50 in Damascus city on 25 January.

Infrastructure for essential services continues to come under deliberate and indiscriminate attack. For example, for nearly two weeks, the Al-Nusra Front has cut water supplies to Idlib city, affecting some 600,000 people. In response, local Government authorities are preventing the delivery of aid to opposition-controlled areas.

Hospitals and schools have not been spared. Physicians for Human Rights documented eight attacks on medical facilities during December, six of them by Government forces. They also documented the deaths of seven medical personnel during the same period, all killed by Government forces, including three who were reportedly tortured to death and one who was executed. At least three schools were reportedly hit by Government airstrikes in Idlib governorate in December, killing nine children and injuring many others.

Meanwhile, the atrocities meted out by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued in areas under its control, including numerous reports of executions, including by stoning and throwing victims from buildings. Its brutal subjugation of women and girls is particularly heinous, and the fate of the women sold into sexual slavery remains deeply concerning.

The relentless violence and destruction in Syria has led to one of the worst displacements of people the world has seen in decades. There are 7.6 million people displaced within the country. Many have been displaced multiple times from one unsafe area to the next. In addition, there are 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries.

Humanitarian organizations continue to strive to help people in desperate need despite the extremely difficult and unsafe operating environment inside the country. Food was distributed to over 3.6 million people in December, emergency non-food items were provided to over 500,000, water and sanitation interventions were provided for approximately 1.5 million and medical assistance was afforded for over 680,000 persons via regular, cross-line and cross-border deliveries. In addition, international and Syrian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) reached 1.5 million people across all sectors.

United Nations cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan into Syria continued to increase. As of 26 January, 59 shipments had been made under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). Those deliveries provided food assistance for over 702,000 people, non-food items for over 615,000, water and sanitation supplies for 311,000 and medical supplies for over 468,000. The World Food Programme reached 315,000 people in rural parts of Dar'a, Quneitra, Idlib and eastern Aleppo city in December via cross-border operations. It plans to scale up further next month, but needs more funds to do so.

Despite those efforts, the needs continue to outpace the response. Approximately 4.8 million people — about 40 per cent of the total 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance — are residing in areas where they struggle to receive basic services and staples, and where humanitarian access remains a significant challenge. Access to ISIL-controlled Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor is particularly concerning. United Nations agencies were unable to deliver food to the entire caseload of 600,000 people in those two governorates in December due to lack of agreement with armed groups on the ground. Many local NGOs in Raqqa have put humanitarian activities on hold, and in the past week some humanitarian organizations in the governorate were closed.

We regret to report that no progress has been achieved on the inclusion of surgical supplies in cross-line humanitarian convoys. In December, injectable medicines and surgical supplies were denied to areas in eastern Ghouta. In January, despite the support of the governor of Homs, Government security forces removed all surgical items, diarrhoea kits, midwifery kits and reproductive health kits from the interagency convoy to Al-Wa'er, in breach of international humanitarian law.

Some 212,000 people are still besieged, 185,500 people by Government forces and 26,500 people by opposition forces, with limited aid reaching only two locations since 1 December. Beginning on 24 December, some 9,000 people, including children and sick and wounded civilians, were able to evacuate towns in eastern Ghouta, some of them reportedly from besieged areas, as a result of local agreements between the parties. We have consistently reported on the severity of conditions inside eastern Ghouta, where aid deliveries continue to be heavily restricted. In 2014, 16 requests to the Government for interagency convoys to eastern Ghouta were made, only four of which were carried out. The remaining 12 were unanswered, denied or subjected to conditions that could not be accommodated. This past week, a further four requests were made to reach the area, and we await a response.

No assistance has reached the Yarmouk camp for Palestinians since 6 December due to ongoing fighting inside and around the camp. Previous deliveries were already sporadic and insufficient to constitute sustained and adequate coverage of the needs of some 18,000 people inside the camp.

Although one additional international non-governmental organization was approved in January, there has been no progress on addressing the administrative constraints placed on international NGOs by the Government of Syria. International NGOs have vast experience and much needed capacity, making them a crucial partner in the effort to meet the ever-growing needs in Syria.

In order for humanitarian agencies to continue their work, more funding is urgently required. The Syria response is now contained in a single plan and appeal and includes assistance both from within the country and through cross-border operations. The response to people inside Syria requires $2.9 billion this year. Last year, we received 48 per cent of the amount requested. A lack of funding — for example, for the winterization programme — means that hundreds of thousands of the 3.3 million people targeted for assistance have not received assistance during this particularly harsh winter.

In conclusion, the Council must find a way to end the conflict in Syria. At the beginning of the conflict, nearly four years ago, 1 million people needed humanitarian assistance inside the country. Today, that figure stands at 12.2 million, and 3.8 million people have fled to neighbouring countries. We must not allow the world to forget Syria and the atrocities being committed against its people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Haydar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Based on the constitutional responsibilities of the Syrian Government vis-à-vis its citizens and its firm position in confronting the terrorist war afflicting Syria, since 2011 the Government has devoted every national capacity to ensuring that the necessary

assistance, shelter, food and medication is provided to all citizens affected by the crimes perpetrated by armed terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government would like to stress its desire to continue to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure that assistance reaches all citizens in every part of Syria without discrimination. Therefore, on 17 December 2014, following consultations and an agreement with the United Nations, the Syrian Government adopted the Syria emergency response plan for 2015, which complemented the national efforts that have been made since the start of the crisis to lessen the suffering of our people and confront the terrorist attacks and the negative impact the foreign intervention in Syria's internal affairs has had.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to express its regret at the fact that those preparing the texts of the relevant draft resolutions have taken unconstructive position vis-à-vis the humanitarian situation in Syria. They have insisted on politicizing this issue and have ignored all the facts and developments on the ground. They have used the same stereotypical language in the report (S/2015/48) and ignored the fact that the humanitarian situation and its deterioration are the result of terrorist attacks by armed terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government would like to stress once again that, without its efforts and cooperation with United Nations agencies and specialized entities, as well as its direct coordination between the parties, and without the support and protection it has provided to United Nations convoys and staff, the Organization would not have been able to deliver any humanitarian assistance at all. To set the record straight, I should stress that since December 2014, as documented by United Nations entities, 6 million people have benefited from food aid, and approximately half a million from medical assistance, from inside Syria. The facts on the ground show that cross-border delivery has been ineffective when it comes to achieving the humanitarian goals that resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) claim to want to achieve, particularly considering the fact that Syria has repeatedly emphasized its readiness to deliver assistance from inside Syria.

We are all now aware that any measures designed to improve the humanitarian situation without consultation and close cooperation with the Government of Syria will not succeed. Those attempting to politicize the humanitarian situation must cease immediately. Such efforts are desperate attempts to violate our Government's sovereignty. We have read the eleventh report of the Secretary-General and our comments on it have been officially submitted to the Security Council. The Government would like to emphasize the incontrovertible truth that the humanitarian situation in Syria cannot be improved without giving priority to the following issues.

First, serious work must be done, in coordination with the Syrian Government, to deal with the fundamental reason for the humanitarian crisis in some regions of Syria, that is, the crimes committed by armed terrorist groups being supported in the region and internationally, including groups related to Al-Qaida and those that are either overtly or covertly connected to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups.

Secondly, we stress the importance of — indeed, the need for — ensuring that the Secretariat's policies are in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the norms governing humanitarian activities, as well as with the provisions of resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), which prioritize the fight against terrorism and terrorist groups, such as ISIL, the Al-Nusra Front and other related organizations. What is needed now is cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government in combating terrorism, with a particular view to ending the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Various parties, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, must end their support, financing and incitement of terrorism and drain the terrorist pond. The United Nations must improve its cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government instead of repeatedly casting doubt on its efforts to reach those affected within Syrian territory, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182.

It is also important to address the lack of financing, one of the fundamental obstacles to implementing the 2014 humanitarian response plan. In that context, I should emphasize that the Syrian Government has been working intensely to meet the needs of its citizens. The coercive, unilateral, illegitimate measures imposed by some countries on Syria, which have had a direct negative effect on Syrian livelihoods, must stop. They have affected many basic, vital sectors, such as health care, education and water and sanitation. In that regard, I refer to the report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs entitled World Economic Situation and

Prospects 2015, which mentions the negative effects of such measures on the livelihoods of Syrian citizens.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) should provide detailed lists of the items and various types of aid that are being sent across borders to various regions in Syria. It should also identify the parties who are receiving that aid, because we have information that aid such as this is reaching terrorist organizations. The Secretary-General's reports must be credible and transparent concerning mechanisms for monitoring cross-border assistance. The facts on the ground show that the United Nations does not have an effective mechanism for ensuring that aid reaches those who genuinely need it in areas controlled by terrorist groups. Turkey must stop using unofficial border crossings for delivering weapons and other lethal equipment and terrorists to Syria. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia must stop using border crossings used by OCHA to send weapons and assistance to the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups. The United Nations has a moral and political responsibility to ensure this. Its officials must stop making statements and producing reports with random, inaccurate and undocumented information on the humanitarian situation in Syria. That is politicization.

The fact that those who prepared today's report insist on using the terms "armed opposition", "non-State armed groups" or just "armed groups" in describing armed terrorist groups is reprehensible and runs counter to the statement in paragraph 10 of the report that Ahrar Al-Sham and Jaish Al-Islam have reached an agreement with the Al-Nusra Front, which is an organization on the Security Council's list. The Council itself has described such groups as terrorist organizations in the past. They use the area of separation as a haven, with clear cover by Israel. We all know now that whenever such terrorist groups fail to put their terrorist crimes into action or are pushed back by the Syrian army, Israel moves in and takes on that role with repeated acts of aggression against our country.

The Government of Syria would like to point out that the number of civilian victims of attacks by armed terrorist groups using various types of explosive ammunition in every governorate of Syria during the period from 21 November to 21 December 2014 totalled 238 dead and 377 injured, including 45 and 82 children, respectively. Those responsible for those acts of terrorism and other heinous crimes are armed terrorist groups, Wahabists trying to cloak themselves under the guise of terms such as "moderate armed opposition", in a desperate attempt to justify their terrorist acts.

My Government continues to take a responsible, effective role in supporting the United Nations in dealing with the humanitarian situation in Syria. That must be based on respect for Syrian sovereignty and full cooperation with my Government in combating terrorism and delivering humanitarian relief assistance.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7370

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7370th meeting
Thursday, 29 January 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2015/17)

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15-02454 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2015/17)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/60, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/17, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I should like to inform the Council that the presidency of the Council has met with the representatives of the parties, who have confirmed that they maintain their well-known positions vis-à-vis the item on the Council's agenda. On the basis of those meetings, with the consent of the members of the Council, the presidency has drawn the conclusion that the Council can proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution before it.

If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2197 (2015).

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements following the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, which plays an important role in maintaining peace and stability on the island. That is why we voted in favour of resolution 2197 (2015).

At the same time, we would like to note that the resolution contains several flaws, first and foremost the lack of readiness of the authors to heed the view of the majority of the members of the Security Council with regard to the issue of renewing intercommunal negotiations. We have a number of serious questions concerning the way in which the work of the penholders was organized, including the delayed consultations on a contentious draft text. Therefore, the time crunch was detrimental to the resolution.

Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain welcomes the adoption of resolution 2197 (2015). In spite of differences during the negotiations, the main purpose of the resolution — to renew the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) — has been achieved. Any step taken towards finding a solution to this issue will always have Spain's support.

Spain appreciates the commendable work done by UNFICYP. I would also like to reiterate my country's resolute support for the good offices of the Secretary-General through his Special Adviser Espen Barth Eide and his renewed efforts to reach an agreement to bring an end to a problem that has lasted for much too long and is affecting an island that is part of the European Union.

Spain urges removing all obstacles and resuming negotiations as soon as possible with a view to finding a path towards a solution of this issue.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France voted in favour of resolution 2197 (2015), prepared by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom, which renews the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). We believe that the role of UNFICYP is crucial. By preventing a resumption of fighting and by contributing to maintaining order and a return to normal life, the Force strengthens trust between the communities and contributes to the overall efforts of the United Nations to support negotiations between Cypriots. In particular, UNFICYP contributes to facilitating the good offices mission of the Special Adviser aimed at reunification under a bicommunal

and bi-zonal federation with political equality. It is therefore crucial that the mission's mandate has been renewed.

Another essential aspect of the work of the Force is to support the humanitarian efforts of the Committee on Missing Persons on behalf of the victims' families. As the resolution notes in its preambular section, 50 years after they disappeared, half of all the missing have yet to be located and more than 70 per cent have yet to be identified. Given those statistics and the advanced age of the parents of the disappeared, France is committed to seeing the Committee's work move at a faster pace through closer cooperation and speedier approval of requests for access to all the areas concerned.

Following the positive momentum resulting from the signing, on 11 February 2014, of a joint statement by leaders of the two communities, it is regrettable that intercommunal negotiations have stalled. It is important that the negotiations resume in order to find a comprehensive solution as soon as possible, based on agreed principles. Along with the Secretary-General, France underscores the importance of a conducive environment to move the negotiations forward.

As the Force begins its fifty-first year of existence, I would like to reiterate France's commitment to a resolution of the Cyprus issue. We commend the tireless efforts to that end by Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and by Special Adviser Espen Barth Eide. We reiterate to them our full support.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7371

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7371st meeting

Thursday, 29 January 2015, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/19)

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15-02468 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/19)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/66, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/19, which contains a letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2198 (2015).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7372

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7372nd meeting

Thursday, 29 January 2015, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Haiti (23 to 25 January 2015)

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15-02474 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Haiti (23 to 25 January 2015)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Council will hear briefings by the representatives of the United States and Chile, the co-leads of the Security Council mission to Haiti.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling today's briefing and for your leadership on what I think we all believe was a timely and valuable mission of the Security Council to Haiti. I would also like to thank all of our colleagues on the Council who joined us in Haiti, since the participation of all 15 members underscored the Council's consistent and unanimous commitment to Haiti's stability, prosperity and democracy.

The timing of the mission proved serendipitous for the Council's engagement on Haiti's troubling situation. Haiti's failure to hold overdue parliamentary elections, attributable in part to its failure to enact an electoral law, resulted in a lapsed Parliament on 12 January, when the terms of all the members of the Chamber of Deputies and half of the Senate's remaining 20 members ended. That development has left President Martelly running the Government under executive authority. While that circumstance is anticipated and permitted in Haiti's Constitution, and has unfortunately happened on multiple occasions in the past, the loss of the principal check on presidential power has provoked renewed anxiety inside and outside Haiti about the health of the country's democracy.

Against that backdrop, we met with President Martelly and a number of his ministers, the 10 remaining seated senators and a range of opposition political leaders. Our message to all was consistent: all sides must redouble their efforts to engage in a constructive dialogue and come to an agreement on a framework for free, fair and inclusive elections as soon as possible, which is in the best interests of the Haitian people. We were encouraged by President Martelly's commitment to limit his use of executive authority, to ensuring the continuity of the State and to organizing elections. Also encouraging was his stated determination to stress inclusiveness and consultation in managing State affairs, as reflected in his formation of a multiparty Government under a Prime Minister drawn from the opposition. The commitment of many opposition parties and leaders to work with the President to find a way out of the political stalemate and put the good of the Haitian people first, notwithstanding their differences, was also heartening.

Checks and balances in Haiti are key, and even more important since the lapsing of the Parliament. The Council conveyed our view that the perceived legitimacy of policies and institutions hinged on the perception that they are derived from broad segments of society and have broad buy-in.

We had an unexpected opportunity to meet with Haiti's new provisional Electoral Council, installed the day of our arrival. Drawn from civil society, the provisional Council is charged with developing a framework for the elections crucial to Haiti's stability. We were impressed with the Electoral Council's seriousness of purpose and commitment to independence, and we offered its members our full support. We also met with leaders from Haitian civil society, in particular women's groups who reminded us of just how much work remains to ensure justice and equality for all Haitians, as well as reminding us of civil society's critical role in the continued stabilization and development of Haiti. They too can count on our continued support and attention, as we told them when we met.

In Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, we had multiple opportunities to meet with the leadership of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and see first-hand the critical work the Mission is carrying out in support of its mandate — a Mission that has stuck with the Haitian people through thick and thin. From supporting the Haitian National Police to pushing for solutions to the problem of lengthy pretrial detention, the Mission is helping ensure a better future for the Haitian people.

Let me again thank and commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sandra Honoré, her team, including troops and police, and all of MINUSTAH's troop- and police-contributing countries for all of their support for Haiti's stability and development.

Our moving visit to Haiti's national memorial for all who lost their lives in the earthquake, which struck five years ago this month, reminded us of the extraordinary scale of the devastation Haiti has endured and the tremendous suffering it caused. For those who have not seen the memorial, it is marked by a large piece of rubble that stands as a stark symbol of all that was destroyed on that day. Yet, in spite of the significant challenges that persist, on our trip we saw evidence everywhere of the incredible resilience and determination of the Haitian people, of rubble that has not only been cleared, but of new structures that have been put up in its place and new hopes that have been raised with them. The Haitian people will continue to have our support as they work to rebuild their country upon that hope.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Chile.

It was an honour for my delegation to co-chair the Council's mission to Haiti. The visit was an expression of the Security Council's commitment to Haiti and, at the national level, a demonstration of Chile's bilateral and multilateral support for that country.

With that in mind, it is important to underscore that one of the Council's primary goals of the trip was to highlight the importance of achieving an inclusive and constructive climate for political stability, democratic governance and development in order to promote conflict prevention. During the visit, Security Council members reaffirmed their support to Haiti and urged all political actors to urgently work together to hold partial legislative elections for the Senate, as well as partial municipal and local elections, that are free, clean, inclusive and transparent, in accordance with Haiti's Constitution. I will not speak at length on this aspect, which was described in detail by the representative of the United States in her statement.

During the visit, Council members also had an opportunity to assess the initiatives undertaken to strengthen the Haitian National Police with the aim of promoting a greater exercise of responsibility by the national authorities of the Haitian State in the maintenance of the country's stability and security. There was recognition of the progress achieved, as well as agreement that this is one of the main areas in which challenges remained, in particular in the lead-up to the elections.

Moreover, during our visit to the women's prison of Pétionville, it was clear that there was a need to make progress towards ensuring the rule of law and security in Haiti, including access to justice.

One of the aspects that most interested Council members concerned the activities related to the evaluation of the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Council, in particular resolution 2180 (2014), given the importance of maintaining an safe and stable environment, especially during the elections to be held in 2015, and the effects of the political and social situation on Haiti's stability and security. The activities in Cap-Haïtien can be seen in that framework, since we were able to see up close the quick impact of projects and programmes to reduce community violence developed by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which remain key to maintaining a stable and secure environment.

With regard to the process of reconfiguring the Mission, members had an opportunity to express their different views on the process at a meeting with the Force Commander.

During the specific meetings carried out with representatives of the international community, in particular with the leadership of MINUSTAH, the United Nations country team and various bilateral representations of the various countries committed to Haiti, we observed that international support continued to be fundamental. In that regard, I want to express my gratitude for the tireless work carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ms. Sandra Honoré, and her team. We would like to reiterate our support for them.

Finally, I want to associate myself with the tribute paid by the representative of the United States to the resilience of the Haitian people demonstrated over the five years since the devastating earthquake, which was manifested during the visit to the memorial erected in their memory. We commend the efforts made by the various Haitian Governments and by the Haitian people to overcome the tragedy and move towards reconstruction. We reiterate our solidarity with the families of the victims and with the survivors.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to express my appreciation to all of the members of the Security

Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.